Miss Priscilla Hunter
My Daughter Susan

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She belonged to our church.— *Page* 7. *Frontispiece.*

MISS PRISCILLA HUNTER,

AND

MY DAUGHTER SUSAN.

BY

PANSY.

AUTHOR OF "ESTER RIED," "CUNNING WORKMEN," "FOUR GIRLS AT CHAUTAUQUA," "LINKS IN REBECCA'S LIFE," &c.

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MISS PRISCILLA HUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

SHE DISCUSSES THE SITUATION.

SHE belonged to our church. That is really the first sentence to use by way of introduction, for if there was any one thing for which she was enlisted, heart and soul and body, it was our church. How did she look? Dear

me! She never stopped to consider and I am not sure that any one else ever did but a great many people knew how she acted, which is certainly much more to the point. The time of which I am about to tell you was one of special interest to our church, in fact affairs reached a crisis, and to come to the point at once, I may as well tell you that we were in debt. Not largely, the sum was not above five thousand dollars, all told. Neither was ours a struggling church, situated on the frontier, or set back in one of the by-ways of the world. On the contrary, it had its visible presence in a well-to-do eastern centre, and was the largest and most flourishing of

the many denominations represented in our town. We had a fair proportion of the monied members of society; several bankers, half a dozen merchants, more than that number of grocers; and a long list belonging to that large and well-to-do class of people, known in aristocratic circles as the middle classes — whatever that term may mean. Nobody knew why we allowed that church debt to accumulate and swallow its hundreds in interest year by year. Can anybody tell why ninety-nine churches out of a hundred allow themselves to do that same thing?

There were those in our congregation who shrewdly suspected that it was for

convenience. It certainly was the most common thing in the world for certain parties when appealed to for contributions in aid of any object under the sun, whether foreign or home missions, church erection, church extension, ministerial relief, or food and clothing for the grasshopper regions of the west, to fall back solemnly and hopelessly into the arms of that church debt, and declare that people should be just, before they are generous, and that honesty should come before benevolence, and all those solemn and truthful and interesting sentences which people are apt to quote when they don't want to give you any money. What is to be done with people, who

in the face of the most earnest appeal that can be made for some object dear to the christian heart, stoically declare to you that the debt ought to be paid? That it is high time the church set itself to work, and sacrificed and strained every nerve towards the accomplishment of that end. This is all true; they mean it, and you agree with them — the question is, why don't you and they set to work and do it, instead of hugging the thing to talk about? Who stands ready to answer?

I frankly confess to you that the debt on our church became our torment, our thorn in the flesh; it was everywhere

present, popping up its hydra head on every conceivable occasion.

We needed new hymn books, but there was that debt — how could a church hope to prosper that bought new hymn books, instead of paying its debts? We needed new library books, our Sabbath-school was running behind on this very account, but think of the enormity of the sin of trying to raise money for library books when that five thousand dollar debt was hanging its mill stone about our necks! We wanted to re-carpet our church and refurnish our pulpit and the seats needed upholstering, and the parsonage kitchen needed a new sink, and drain, and pump, and the parson-

age grounds needed a new fence; the old one had been a source of humiliation to us for years; but who had the courage to talk about perpetrating such deeds of darkness as the getting and doing of all these things when that debt remained unpaid?

By this time I hope you perceive that our church debt was an intolerable nuisance, and yet we clung to it.

Well, all this is a digression — I was going to tell you about Miss Priscilla Hunter — how on a certain sunny morning not many years ago, the wife of one of our deacons went with the wife of one of our doctors to call on her; their object being to see about some pants

for the five-year-old deacon and the six-year-old doctor. Miss Priscilla, you must understand, was a tailoress.

"I like your work better than the tailor's," said the doctor's wife. "I can never get a tailor to make things look cunning and childish; they always turn out work that is fit only for great rough boys." Of course you do not need to be told that her boy was not a great rough one, but on the contrary was the most superior boy that ever lived. Be it known also in passing, that Miss Priscilla's work was worthy of being liked by anybody, not a garment ever went from her careful hand until it was as neat and precise in all its details as skill and

deftness could make it. From pants, the talk drifted to church matters, whither Miss Priscilla's talk was sooner or later as sure to turn as the needle turns to the pole. They discussed the condition of the carpets, and the holes that were showing in the cushions, and the need there was of putting in a furnace before another winter — and they told how the children said they had read every old book in that library a dozen times at the very least. Then their sympathies reached the parsonage, and they told each other how dreadful that rickety fence did look and how ashamed they were of it the last time Gov. Parker was in town and called there; and the doctor's wife told

how the doctor had said again and again that it was actually a tempting of Providence for the parsonage grounds not to have better drainage, and the talk all ended, as it always did, with the woe-begone murmur: "Oh, if we were *only* out of debt, we might set about some of these things right away; but as it is —" and then there followed an indescribable, thrice-echoed, long-drawn-out sigh.

I suppose if that sentence had been dolefully whined out once, it had been five hundred times, by the different members of our church during the years in which we had been victims to that debt.

After this there was silence for several

Presently she burst forth.— *Page* 19.

minutes. Miss Priscilla sewed away hard, snipping off her thread from time to time with an energetic whisk of her great, shining shears, pursing up her thin mouth in a way that told of a great many things which she would like to say, and of some which she *would* say, before she was much older.

Presently she burst forth: "Now look here, Mis'. Baker, I'm tired of that kind of talk; my ears have ached for years with hearing so much of it, and I've just made up my mind it was time that debt was paid. It has hung over us, and whined and groaned and howled at us, long enough. There never was anything in our church that Satan liked so well as

that abominable debt; and it's my opinion that he has been tickled with it as long as is good for him. Not a thing do we try to do from sending Bibles to the heathen, to mending our rickety parsonage fence, but he swoops down on us and gets off a lot of what passes for pious groaning, about that debt! It's all Satan from beginning to end, and it is time it was stopped; now what I say is, let's *pay* the debt without any more fuss about it."

"For pity's sake!" and "why, dear me!" murmured the deacon's wife and the doctor's wife in a breath, according to their several natures; and Mrs. Dr. Baker added: "*I* wish with all my heart it might

be paid, I am sure; I'd be willing to sacrifice a great deal — though mercy knows I don't know what to sacrifice more than I'm doing — but I don't see any prospect of its *ever* being paid. For my part I am clear discouraged."

"Well now, that's no kind of way to talk; you've no right to be discouraged; it's the Lord's church I reckon almost as much as it's ours, and he don't want to see it disgraced with a debt any *more* than we do, to say the least. My proposition is to just put our shoulders to the wheel and lift it, and say no more about it."

"Priscilla Hunter!" almost screamed Mrs. Deacon Jones; "how is it going to

be done? Now, that is what *I'd* like to know? Why, we've strained every nerve, and lifted and lifted, and all we've been able to do is just to pay the interest, and sometimes, you know as well as I do, that we have had to borrow money to do that.

"If our rich men would just take hold of it and give as they *ought* to give, it could all be wiped out in a day; but I have lost all hope in that direction."

This from Mrs. Dr. Baker.

Then Priscilla:

"Oh, now, Mis' Baker, don't you go to making yourself believe that *that's* pious talk. That's just Satan hanging round, and nothing else. Not but what he

hangs around the rich men and whines out his say; and I've no kind of doubt he says to them if the sewing-girls and tailoresses, and hod-carriers and cobblers, would all just come up to the help of the Lord against this debt, no doubt we could lift it. I tell you it's one of his dodges to hang around people and whine out, *if* Mr. Somebody Else and his wife and children would *only* do their duty we could swim through. Now I ain't one to say that the rich men couldn't pay the debt in our church if they were a mind to — for I believe they could and what is more I *know* they could — but they don't do it, and as far as I can see they don't mean to; and Satan he don't mean

they shall, and he wants to keep me busy all the time, groaning over their failings. Now for my part I'm tired of his company. I've shook him off; he won't groan to me on that subject again in a hurry. I say we give him the cold shoulder and just make an end of this thing."

How fast Miss Priscilla could sew! her fingers fairly flew over the seam, and her keen grey eyes flashed along the stitches like soldier's bayonets. The two callers looked at her in dumb amazement; the doctor's wife even wondering whether "much stitching might not have made her mad."

As for Mrs. Deacon Jones, she looked thoughtful.

"Land alive!" she said. "How are we to do it? We've had suppers, and festivals, and pound-parties, and all those things, till people are sick of their very names."

"Oh, suppers!" said Miss Priscilla, with a sniff of her long, keen nose. "Don't for pity's sake let *me* hear anything about *them!* They're nice enough in their way, for stomachs, and sociala-bility, and all that. I haven't got a word to say against 'em. But for paying a debt — humph! You set to work and bake a lot of cake, and use up butter and eggs, and sugar and cream enough to make a dollar's worth at the very least, and then you carry it down to the church

and your husband comes and eats a piece of it, and a piece of turkey that somebody else has brought — and that cost two dollars — and a piece of chicken, and a slice of bread, and another slice of another kind of cake that somebody *else* has brought, and a slice of everything under the sun; and his stomach feels better after it all *maybe* — only I doubt it — but as for the money part, why he pays fifty cents for his supper and it goes into the treasury; and after the broken dishes are paid for and the things you had to buy to piece out with are paid for, and a dozen and one things that nobody ever thought of are paid for, why, what's left of it goes *towards* paying the debt. That's social now, I

dare say, but it isn't economical, and *I* don't expect to get out of debt by a hundred years of such management as that. There's only one way that's worse, and I'm thankful to remember that our church has never sunk so low as to try it. They have been doing it up in Circleville where I was sewing for a month. They had a debt of three hundred dollars, or at least they were behind that much; and how do they pay it? You'd never guess in the world. They got together and talked it up, and planned about what hard times it was, and how they ought to get out of debt *now*, or else they would surely be going deeper and deeper all the time, and

finally they agreed to make a great sacrifice, and pay that debt. So they sent a committee to the minister:

"'Now these are hard times you know,' says the committee looking wise, 'and it becomes those in Zion to be willing to sacrifice and suffer if need be for the cause. We have made up our minds that this debt ought to be paid, and we have come to you — the watchman upon the walls — as a proper person to set the example.'

"And then they proceed to show him how.

"'You see there is a debt of about three hundred dollars, and your salary is fifteen hundred. Now these are very

"Now these are very hard times."— *Page* 28.

hard times, and a man ought to be willing to sacrifice for the good of the cause you know, and we think by economy you could live on twelve hundred dollars, and then we would be out of debt — don't you see — and what a grand and glorious day that will be!'

"Then they got eloquent and pathetic over that grand and glorious day! I sat and listened to all the talk about *sacrifice* and *setting example*, and at last I boiled over. It was none of my business, but I couldn't help it.

"'Um!' says I. 'Live and learn; now that's a new idea. *We're* in debt, too, but we never thought of any such plan. I'll go home and tell our folks about it,

and see if we can manage in some such way. Let me see, it is done by *sacrificing;* that is, the minister sacrifices enough salary to pay it all up, and you sacrifice *him.* That's the way, isn't it?'

"I tell you I was mad. Mr. Grimes looked pretty black over what I said, and says he:

"'A minister certainly ought to be willing to set an example of sacrifice in these hard times.'

"'Of course' says I. 'But then I always thought an *example* was something for folks to follow; now unless you have all pitched in and concluded to sacrifice *him* for your part of the work, I don't see how you have helped;

and even then, that doesn't seem exactly following an example; it strikes me you are doing the leading off. I see through what the example is, says I. If you talked that stuff to your pastor, and he didn't ask you mildly, to step out of his house and let him lock the front door, why you've got an example of Christian forbearance to follow all the days of your life. I tell you it is the easiest thing in the world to do other folk's sacrificing for 'em. I'd just as soon give Mrs. Merchant's new dress for the church as not, but *mine* is another matter — always provided I had a new one to give, which I never *do*

have. It's a good deal easier for me to *talk about* giving it, on that account.'"

When the Mrs. Doctor and the Mrs. Deacon had had their laugh out over this remarkable story, the latter said:

"*Well*, as you say, we'll never descend to any such performance, I *do* hope. But I'm sure I don't see what we *are* to do."

"I do then," said Miss Priscilla, sewing away faster than ever. "And I can show you, if you'll set to work and do it. You'll have a call from me about this very thing before the week is out. I want you both to go home and think of what you have said a hundred times, and repeated in my shop this very morning; that you were willing to *sacrifice*, if the

debt could only be paid. I want you to go down on your knees and ask the Lord what that word means; and mind I warn you, don't let Satan get your mind wandering off to the sacrificing of Mr. Merchant or Mr. Ritchie, or any other of our rich men. That's easy. If I've paid the church debt for 'em *once*, I have a hundred times; but you see neither of 'em being our minister, we can't go up to 'em and *demand* a sacrifice, so we have our planning for nothing.

"What I've made up my mind to do is just to tend to my own self — get up my own sacrifices, or ask the Lord to get 'em up for me — make 'em so

plain that if I shut my eyes I'll *stumble* over 'em. Now that's what I want you to do; and then, when your mind is made up, all I ask of you is to put it on paper for me, and let me carry it around in my pocket awhile as an evidence of what the Lord has showed to *you.* I see what I can do; anyhow I see one place plain enough; my time is my bread and butter, and my bread and butter are all I've got in this *world;* if I give them, it stands to reason that I can't do much more. I've made up my mind to give them — not but what I shall contrive to throw an odd dime or two into the bargain now and then."

CHAPTER II.

SHE THROWS NEW LIGHT ON TAXATION.

THAT was the way it began. No, I mistake, it began back of that; one night with Priscilla Hunter on her knees, her soul heavy within her because of the disgrace lying *heavy* on *our church*; she prayed and then she crept back into bed, and tossed, and tumbled, and thought, and finally flung aside the

clothes and got on her knees again seeking for light; and at last with a smile on her face as of one who had received light, smoothed her small, rumpled pillow, and laid her grey head on it and went quietly to sleep; since which time her plans had been maturing.

Behold her one morning, instead of being seated at her accustomed corner by that little east window, with her lapboard standing up beside her, and her bit of wax, and her black thread, and grey thread, and gleaming shears on a chair before her, and the great pressing-goose heating itself on the coals in her bit of a kitchen — behold her with her neat black bonnet, and her neat black

shawl, and her neat black cotton gloves all donned, arrayed for walking; and in her window carefully printed out in let-

ters so large and smooth that it had taken her half the afternoon before to accomplish them, this sentence: "Gone

on a three weeks' vacation." Yet she didn't expect to leave the town, it was only her way of saying:

"You needn't expect a stitch of work from me for the next three weeks, and that's all there is about it."

Ten minutes after, she had locked her door and clamped down the steep steps. She stood in Mr. Merchant's presence in the First National Bank of our city.

"Good morning," she said, and then she dashed into her subject without hesitation or circumlocution. "Mr. Merchant *we have made up our minds to pay that church debt;* it has been on our hands long enough, and we are sick of it; the money is all to be raised

now without fail, in six months time. We want you to head the subscription; what will you give?"

"Well, really," said Mr. Merchant, somewhat taken aback by this abrupt announcement, and the peculiar manner of its wording.

"I'm sure I'm wonderfully glad that the *debt* is to be paid at last."

"Of *course* you are; every one in his senses is; the question is, how much are you going to help?"

"Well, as to that, how many times have I subscribed for that very thing; and how much money do you suppose I have sunken in paying that debt?"

"Not a cent," said Miss Priscilla

firmly. "Never a cent; you've given a good deal I suppose in the last dozen years to some idiot who came around trying to see how much money he could raise *towards* paying it. It has always gone *towards* paying it, mind you, and never to *pay it*. Women don't do business in that way; we are sick of forever going *towards* a thing and never reaching it. We've just walked up to this and taken it by the throat; now how much are you willing to give? Not to see it choked a little, mind you, with a fair prospect of coming to life again, but *killed outright*."

"Do you mean," asked Mr. Merchant, greatly amused, "that unless you raise

the whole amount I am not to be called on to pay my subscription?"

"Well, if you like that namby-pamby way of putting it, you can have it so; but I won't take any unfair advantage of you. I'll say outright in plain English, that whatever you put down *will be called for;* and you won't be asked to give anything again as long as you live *for this debt*, because it *is going to be paid.* Now, how much shall it be?"

"Three hundred dollars?" said Mr. Merchant, at random.

"All right; put it down in black and white in this book. If I was your conscience, I should say you ought to make it five hundred at least, but see-

ing I'm *not*, I'll let that part alone and take the three hundred and be on my way. Make it payable six months from to-day, if you please, at ten o'clock A. M."

And in less time than it takes me to tell it, Miss Priscilla had received back her little red-covered book whipped it into her pocket, made her best bow to the amused Mr. Merchant, and was off.

"I might as well made it a thousand to encourage her," he said, looking after her and laughing. "It will never be collected; people are about tired of calls for the payment of that debt."

Just what Mr. Merchant thought was going to become of the debt in that

case, he did not state. On went Miss Priscilla on her self-appointed task. Her next call was at the house of one of the merchant princes of their church, Mr. Hoardwell. Was there a faint sarcasm intended by his ancestors in forcing that name on him? Certainly if there was any one thing at which this man was an adept, it was the art of *hoarding;* that he certainly *could do well.* He put on his longest face the minute that Miss Priscilla told her errand, which she did in as rapid and straightforward a way as she had used before.

"Well, now, Miss Hunter, I appreciate your errand, and the motive which prompts you."

"Never mind about the motive, or the appreciation Mr. Hoardwell, it is the *check I'm* after. There are a great many people to call on, you know. I mean to give every man, woman and child a chance; it is the last time."

A faint smile illumined his sallow face.

"If one could only have your sanguine spirit, Miss Hunter. The debt *ought* to be paid; there is no question about that to my mind; it is a disgrace to our society that it isn't; I have said so a great many times."

"I know it; I've heard you say it in prayer-meeting twenty times at the very lowest, I should think; so there's no need of saying it again. Now's your

chance to *prove* that you *think* so; there is nothing like proving sums, you know. Come, how much?"

"Well, really, I am not in circumstances to give very liberally at this time; I have had heavy losses, and my taxes were never greater than they are this year; almost any year since I have been in business I could do better than I can to-day."

"That's a pity; I wish you had done twice as much then five years ago as you are going to do to-day; but it is never too late to begin. What shall it be?"

"You quiet people, Miss Hunter, who sit in your pleasant rooms outside of

the bustle and fret of business have very little idea of the risks and losses; you always suppose us to be made of money."

"You *have* a good deal more risk of loss than I do, Mr. Hoardwell, that's a fact; I appreciate it. Did you ever hear the story of the man who heard that a certain bank had failed, and felt uneasy till he hurried home to see whether he had any money of theirs, but he found he hadn't a *dollar* on that bank or any other, and then he felt safe. I'm exactly in his circumstances; no risk of *my* houses burning down, or a thief stealing my bonds. I'm as safe about all them things as though

I was the only being on earth. And as for taxes, well, *they* don't trouble me either; never did."

"That is it, Miss Hunter; and you see the fact is, people who don't have those drains on their purse have no idea what heavy ones they are. There's that one building of mine across the way, I don't believe you could imagine what it has cost me for one thing and another this past year."

"I don't suppose I could," said Miss Hunter, with a solemn face; "it is a good big building, I should say it must have cost a great deal. I declare, now you speak of it, it doesn't seem hardly fair that you should have all the tax-

paying to do, and so many of us go free from such trials. I wonder a different arrangement isn't made; I dare say nobody has thought of it; but I don't believe in that kind of thing; I think we ought to bear one another's burdens. I'll tell you what we'll do, Mr. Hoardwell. You make that property over to the church, give them a fair right and title to it you know, and we'll engage to pay all the taxes on it from this time forth; and what is more, you needn't pay a cent towards raising this debt!"

"I should think not!" exclaimed Mr. Hoardwell, with a laugh and a significant sniff. "Why my dear woman, that

property is very valuable; it would pay the debt three times over."

"That's neither here nor there, you know. What you were complaining of was the taxes on it, and if I understood what you were driving at, it was because of those taxes and some others, that you couldn't make as large a contribution as you wanted to. Now if it really *is* a burden, and you feel the weight of it, why not get rid of it, and at the same time do a good deed to the church; we are willing to help you in this thing; I promise you that any more tax, or any more repairs on that building is something that you needn't con-

cern yourself with for the next hundred years, if you will just give us a deed of it."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Hoardwell "You ladies like your little jokes I see; that is very well put, I declare."

"Jokes! I was never more in earnest in my life; why not? If it *isn't* a burden; if, on the other hand it is so much wealth, and you can afford to pay heavy taxes on it for the sake of the income which it brings you, then *what in the name of common sense did you mean?*"

Mr. Hoardwell had certainly never looked at the matter in just that light before; and whatever other follies he

"Sorry to take so much of your time."—*Page* 55.

was guilty of, it was a long time after that, before he excused himself from benevolence on the plea of heavy taxes. It took *more* talk, and a great deal of it, and even then I fear that Miss Priscilla would have walked away without her contribution but for unfailing good-nature and unselfishness.

"I am sorry to take so much of your time," said Mr. Hoardwell, looking at his watch and fingering his hat. "Really how late it is getting." He understood all those little gentlemanly devices for getting rid of a troublesome caller as well as a *gentleman* could. "But I must say I don't feel this morning, like —

"Oh, no trouble in life," interrupted Miss Priscilla, with good-humored alacrity:

"If you don't feel ready to decide this morning why I can call again just as well as not. I've set out to *do* this thing, and I mean to do it; there are a good many to call on. I mean to give every man, woman and child, a chance, and I'll have to pass here pretty often, so I can call as well as not. I'll just drop in every morning as I pass by, and whenever you have made up your mind, you can just say the word, and in that way it won't take much of your time."

How many such calls do you think even Mr Hoardwell stood? Let me

tell you; just five! Absolutely it took him five days to make up his mind that it was impossible to avoid giving something. He couldn't comfort himself in the way that Mr. Merchant had; for he feared there was a possibility that *sometime*, away in the dim, distant future, he *might* be called upon to redeem his pledge.

"There!" said Miss Priscilla, drawing a long sigh of relief one very rainy morning as she splashed down the walk from his door with his name on her list for one hundred dollars; "if I haven't earned that money then I never *did* earn any in my life. I've a great mind to scratch out his name and put

Priscilla Hunter there in its place; for if *I* didn't give it, who did? It's harder work than boys' pants at seventy-five cents a pair; but I've *got* it."

CHAPTER III.

BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL WOMEN.

TRAMP! tramp! how many miles did Miss Priscilla walk during that three weeks' vacation? *She* didn't know, and so her list grew, she didn't *care*. But even *she* had not realized the magnitude of the task which she had undertaken. Once she sat and moralized about it in the darkness of her

room. She was economizing coal-oil, for the sake of the church debt. It was a chink from which she saw that one of those odd dimes could drop; and such chinks were few in her life of toil and pinch. She sat there alone, by a bit of a fire, for the autumn days were chill and frosty, when they were not damp and foggy, in the extreme. She had made some curious calls that day.

"I don't wonder," she said, thinking aloud, according to her fashion. "I don't wonder that old woman said it took all sorts of folks to make a world, and for her part she was glad she wa'n't one of 'em. Sensible old woman! If one only *needn't be* 'one of 'em.' If a

body could climb up somewhere on a hill and look down on all these humans, and feel herself a hundred thousand miles above 'em, why then, a body could breathe better. I wonder now if that ain't a little bit like what heaven is—feeling, in a good, glad, clean, comfortable sense, without a speck of pride in it; that you've got above it all—all the worry, and fuss, and pinches, and scrimps, and stings, and bruises and meannesses, and *debts*, forever and ever! But then, dear me! the widow Dixon will get there too. Well, that's nice, I'm sure. It is a blessed thing that some day she will get her soul clean out of that little cramped-up body of her's, and have

room to breathe. How she will look down on herself, though! the part of her that she lived down here in the hollow! Well, for the matter of that, Priscilla Hunter, so will *you*. Don't you go to being puffed up.

"Pity's sake! if you weren't going to be a better woman by ten thousand times when you get to heaven than you are here, why heaven would be an out and out disappointment, that's all.

"And there will be no such thing as that hateful word, up there, bless the Lord; haven't I his own word for it? Didn't he say we should be '*satisfied*?"

"I wonder what it feels like to be *satisfied!*

"There's a pair of shoes gone towards the debt! a hole clear through one of 'em, and a grinning place in the other that will *be* a hole long before I have tramped this town over many times

A sacrifice to the cause.

more. Well now, Priscilla Hunter, what are you talking about? The Lord knows that you counted the cost, and then deliberately gave these three weeks, shoes and all to the cause; I don't know that

it makes any difference to you, whether anybody else ever knows it or not. You needn't be a mite afraid about the shoes, either. He can manage to have you get a pair of shoes I guess, when you need 'em. It is a mercy that you haven't got *that* to worry about."

Miss Priscilla's interview with the widow Dixon, which lay somewhat heavily on her heart, is worthy of a word of detail. The widow Dixon belonged to that class of persons who, with house, and garden, and farm, and cattle, and barns well-stored, and with a fair proportion of this world's goods converted into railroad and bank stock, yet apparently firmly expect to end their days in the

poor-house, or at least, to come to poverty! Moreover, the widow Dixon knew what it was to understand other people's duties for them.

"It is a burning shame that they have let this debt hang on so!" she exclaimed, waxing into the excited state the minute the subject was mentioned. "I've said it a hundred times. The church needn't ever hope to prosper so long as it shirks its honest debts in the kind of way ours has; and I say it is a sin and a shame!"

"So it is!" interrupted Miss Priscilla in a soothing tone. "What I say is, let's pay it *now*, and be done with it."

"Oh, yes, Miss Hunter, you and I who

have nothing to pay with, can talk that way till the next century, and it won't do any good. I say let those who are rolling in wealth — so much money they don't know what to do with it — shoulder the burden and carry it. That's the way to do it."

"But they *won't* shoulder it, Mis' Dixon. I'm willing enough to have 'em use their shoulders, and I've been waiting for *their* shoulders till I'm sick and tired of it. Now, I'm going to use my *own*, and you must put yours against mine, and give a lift with the rest."

"Not I. I've said I wouldn't give a cent towards that debt, and I don't believe I will. It never ought to have been

"Not I."—*Page* 66.

made in the first place. A *church* running in debt! *I'm* never in debt, and I don't run around the town coaxing people to put their shoulders to the wheel and help me pay my grocery bill."

"Of course you don't, Mis' Dixon, and you are not going to begin it now, at this late day. When your grocery bill comes due, you just put your hand in your pocket and bring out the money, and that's exactly what I want you to do to-day. This is *your* bill — a piece of it — as much as it is mine, and Mr. Merchant's and all the others. There's no benevolence about it, nor charity, nor nothing of that kind. I ain't around begging just now; I'm good at *that*,

too, when the right time comes, and I mean to do some of it before long, but all in life I'm doing now is just presenting folks' bills and asking 'em to pay their debts; it's all mapped out, each one his and her share; some of 'em won't pay their *share* to be sure, and some others will have to come in and help pay their bills, just as we have to help pay the grocery bills for the town's poor, but you don't expect *me*, of course, to go to Deacon Jones, or Mr. Merchant and beg a little money to help pay *your* debt with. I reckon you're too honest a woman for that. You see it's a mere matter of business, and what *they* give towards it has no more to do with your

share, than what I give towards paying my grocer's bill has to do with you paying yours. Don't you see?"

"No, I don't. I must say you always could make white look black, if you wanted to. What I say is, I'm too poor to give anything to the church this year; it as as much as I can do to support my family. It isn't as if I were rich; I'd be willing if I had the money that some have, to pay the whole debt and be done with it."

"I wish to the life you had it then; just to shame some of those who won't pay their share, and make it necessary for somebody to go begging for 'em. It'll come to that, I dare say, because there's

some folks that just *won't* pay their debts, and you can't help yourself, so I'm free to confess that I *may* have to come around again to get you to take a tug at other folks' duties, and then of course you'll have a chance to say which you will do — yes or no. But I'm not after anything of the kind to-day; haven't got to it yet. All I want now is for you to *pay your debt* — the part of it that belongs to *you* and nobody else — that's every earthly thing that I'm after. So come, don't let me take any more of your time."

And she actually befuddled that woman into putting down in black and white the sum that was her fair share of the

Miss Almina St John.— *Page* 75.

debt in question. Her comment as she clicked the latch of that gate, was:

"Well, well! St. Paul got along nicely being all things to all *men*, I dare say — but if he had tried being all things to all women, I ain't sure but he'd have given up in disgust. Not that *I* mean to, to be sure, but then *I'm* a *woman!*"

All sorts of people she dealt with. There was Miss Almina St. John, a gay young member of the church, who when accosted by Miss Priscilla, answered:

"Oh, horrors! *I* don't know anything about money or debts. I always send my bills to papa and he pays them, and that is all I have to do with it."

"All right," said Miss Priscilla, whip-

ping out her pencil from her great pocket. "*That's* easy done; just write a note directing him to pay your share of this debt, and I've no manner of doubt he'll do it; he's not the man to refuse a just bill."

"But I don't understand. What on earth are you talking about? Why don't you go to papa for a subscription if you want money? What do I know about it, or what is it to me?"

"Why, bless your heart, child! I *have* been to him for his part, but I supposed young ladies like you, had your pin-money, and out of it were supposed to pay your small debts. Your share isn't *large*, to be sure, but it needs *paying*, just

the same as though it were. I didn't understand that I was to take it to your father. If that's the way, just write your note and I'll tramp back there with it in a twinkling."

"What an idea!" said Miss Almina, thoughtfully. An idea really *was* beginning to penetrate through her frizzes. "Send an order to papa for a church debt! He would think I was demented. Why, Miss Priscilla, if he has subscribed, there is an end of it, I should think."

"I can't for the life of me see why. He didn't pay your share; only his own. If he eats his dinner, I suppose that isn't the end of it, you have to eat yours, besides. There's the church, and you

own a share in it; you helped get it into debt, you step on the carpets and sit under the gaslight, and wear out the cushions every Sabbath-day when you are not too tired, or too sleepy, or too *something* to come to church. Any way you have contrived to wear out the little share I've here put you down for. There's the strangest notions that I'm out on this tramp for the sake of benevolence; I haven't a benevolent idea in my head, and don't mean to have 'till this debt is paid; it's *justice* we're after now; honesty, common honesty. Are you going to pay your share, child, or shall I put you down on the pauper-

list, to be looked after by the church at large?"

Then the fair Almina laughed outright.

"What funny notions!" she said: "let me see my share — *the idea!* is *that* all that belongs to me? That's just a trifle. I have an allowance of course, but it would be so comical to take any of it for such a purpose! Though after all as you say, I don't know why I shouldn't. Only it is *so funny!* If I do it, the girls all ought to. Don't you mean to make the girls all do it, Miss Priscilla?"

"*I* make them!" said Miss Priscilla, snapping her keen, grey eyes at the fair,

frizzled head; "*I make* the girls in our church pay their debts! Have we any really dishonest ones among us? Of course if they can pay *anything*, they'll pay this."

"Well, it's the funniest thing I ever did in my life!" laughed Miss Almina, but she *did* it, wrote her aristocratic name in delicate, unreadable Italian tracery, and added in good honest figures the sum which Miss Priscilla had specified as her fair share of the debt. And thereafter, she talked her 'idea' to all the girls, to say nothing of the boys. Unwittingly, Miss Priscilla had secured an ally, and greatly she rejoiced thereat.

CHAPTER. IV.

SHE FINDS SUBSTANCE IN SMOKE.

HER scheme widened and lengthened as she tramped. She called one day on Mr. Leonard Phelps. Now Mr. Leonard Phelps was one of those good-natured young men who have fair salaries, and contrive to eat, and drink, and drive and *smoke* every cent of them up, until some day they get married,

and then they pinch, and twist, and save, and grumble for the rest of their lives, but as a rule they contrive to eat, and smoke, and drive on.

Mr. Phelps was in the middle stage of this disease. He was a clerk in a large dry-goods house; a favorite clerk, receiving a good salary, and having at present no one besides himself and the young lady who chanced to take his passing fancy, on which to spend his money.

He was a favorite with Miss Priscilla; she liked him just as a good many others did, without any definite reason save the fact that she couldn't help it.

"He is an idot!" she was apt to

She found him alone at his counter.— *Page* 85.

say, snapping her eyes and sewing fast. "Just a born idiot, and nothing else; wasting his time and his talents, and frolicing through his life, for all the world like the "gaudy young butterfly" that I used to read about when I went to school. But for all that, I can't help liking him; though I can't see anything in life that ought to be liked about him."

It was on this young man whom she called with her subscription paper. She found him alone at his counter, in good humor, as he generally was, and engaged in whistling while he tried to determine in his own mind where to waste the evening which was drawing

near, and which fell to him as a leisure one.

He parried Miss Priscilla's thrusts with the most good-natured skill for some time, then, growing weary of her, said courteously:

"The truth is, Miss Hunter, I should like exceedingly well to help you; I don't know anything that would give me greater pleasure if I were able to do it; but the honest fact is that I haven't the money to spare. It is all I can do to live, these are hard times you know; and what with this and that unexpected drain on my purse — for something is always coming up to take money — it is a regular struggle

with me to keep out of debt. I feel almost worn out in the attempt."

"You *do* look thin, that's a fact!" said Miss Priscilla, in a significant tone; and she surveyed his large, well-proportioned, somewhat portly form, with such an air of mock commiseration on her face, that it provoked a burst of laughter from the gay young man.

"I don't want to be hard on you," continued his tormenter. "I know you have a great many depending on you for food and clothes, and all that sort of thing, it is not to be expected that with your little bit of a salary—it takes me exactly three years and eight months sewing ten hours a day, three hundred

and thirteen days in a year, to make it, out of pants — so of course I know you can't have much to give. Let me have for the next six months, what you know on your honor as a gentleman you would spend in smoke, and I'll let you off from the balance."

"Smoke!" he said, somewhat taken aback. "Oh now, Miss Priscilla! you wouldn't be so hard-hearted as to have me give up my cigars? They are all the comfort I have in life."

"Poor fellow! getting comfort out of smoke; you *are* poor, that's a fact! And so you are willing to own that you care more for your puffs of smoke than you do for the Lord?"

"Oh, as to that, I'm not a professor of religion, you know; it is not expected of me to be governed by any such motives."

"Bless me! why not? Who doesn't expect it of you? That's the queerest way to talk I ever heard of! Suppose you were called on to help your father's family, would you say: 'Well now, I don't pretend to belong to my father's family. I eat food of his providing to be sure, and wear clothes which his money furnishes, but I have never made any profession of belonging to the family, and I don't see how I can be expected to take an interest in them?"

Certainly, this was a new way of putting a truth, and Mr. Leonard Phelps who was not easily embarrassed, felt his face flush slightly, as one who realized that his logic had put him into very close quarters.

"Well, but, Miss Hunter," he said, rallying, "you will surely admit that there is a difference between people who profess religion, and those who do not."

"I dare say there is. As much difference in fact, as there is between a son who professes to love his father, and one who doesn't. But if you mean there ought to be a difference, I can't say that I see how it takes away a son's obligation to behave himself, be-

cause he doesn't profess to care for his father's family. You see, young man, it isn't a question that lies with you to settle, whether you will have Mr. Marcus Phelps for your father or not. He *is* your father, and you can't help yourself; and you owe him your love — whether he gets it or not, is another thing. Now what you need to remember, is, that the Lord is your father, whether you choose to own him or not; and he has a right to your love, and your help. Whether you give him his rights or not, is your affair, and his. But don't go to saying that a thing isn't expected of you, because you don't do it! That's ruinous doctrine, and hasn't

any common sense about it, either. There's lots expected of people on the score of their having brains, and souls, and all that, and they seem to take delight some of 'em in disappointing all the expectations that their friends have; but, unless they are born idiots, they won't pretend that shirking their duty releases them from all responsibility in the matter."

This is only a part of the conversation; it was continued at some length, and grew serious, developing more thought about these matters of obligation, and fatherhood, and sonship, than *this* young man had ever given before; and we cannot yet tell whereunto this

thing may grow; certain it is though, that he gave his promise, not to give up smoking, indeed — that was perhaps too much for so voluptuous a nature to do on the sudden—but to hold himself to a strict account with his cigars, and whatever they cost him for the next six months, deliver that sum into the church-fund for his share of the payment of the debt.

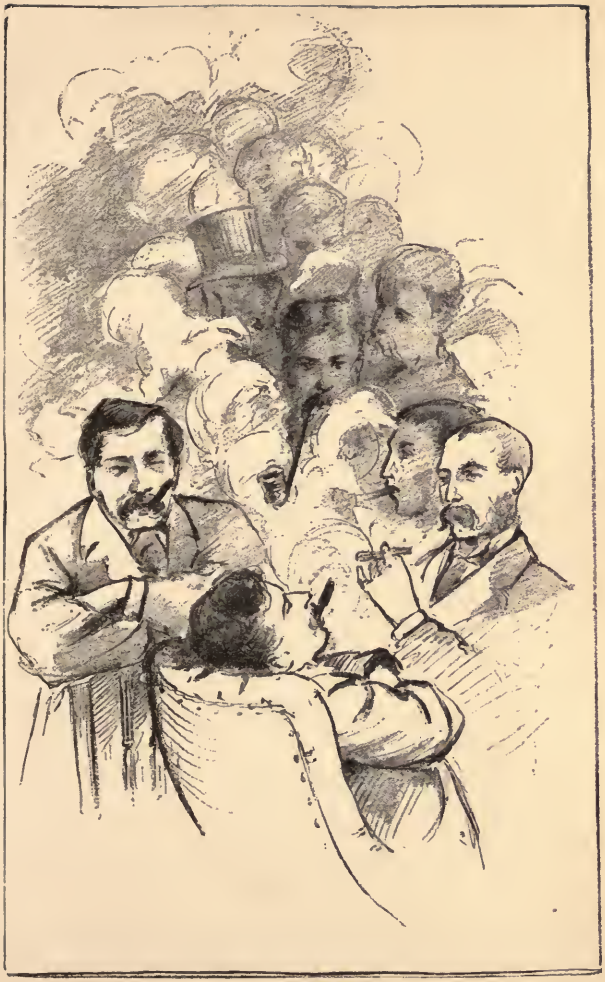
Miss Priscilla readily agreed to that, and trudged away saying to herself with a satisfied nod:

"There's an honest penny towards paying the share of those who *won't* pay; he doesn't think he'll double his share by the means — but I *know* it."

The talk had suggested a new idea to her busy brain, and before that day was done she had made several dashes at young men in the church and congregation, the result of which she entered in her book under the brief but expressive heading:

"In account with *smoke*"—so much.

Tramp! tramp! The days went on, so did the work. Those who were amused at first and eager, gradually lost interest, and as Miss Priscilla kept her own counsel as to results, ceased questioning her, or talking about the new enterprise; and finally those who thought about it at all, contented themselves with the fond memory that they were not to be called on



"In account with smoke."— *Page* 94.

for the payment of their subscriptions unless the whole sum was raised. They had Miss Priscilla's word for that.

The three weeks passed, and she took down her vacation sign, and sat again in her one window, with shears and buttons and thread around her, and sewed steadily a large share of the day; but regularly, as the light began to wane, donned shawl and bonnet, and trudged off.

Also she had many schemes not apparently connected with the church debt. "Might as well kill two birds with one stone," she had begun to say early in her rounds. So she had planned, and matured, and actually started an enterprize whereby every woman in the church

was pledged to make an apron, or a towel, or a stove-holder, or a pair of stockings, *something* with her own hands, and have ready for Miss Priscilla against a certain day of the month, in a certain month of the year.

"*This* is *charity*," explained Miss Priscilla. "This is for the heathen."

"But what are you going to do with them? The heathen don't want kitchen aprons and dish-towels; they want Bibles and tracts."

"Never you mind that!" would Miss Priscilla return, followed with a peculiar pressure of her lips: "There's many a heathen would be the better for a good decent kitchen apron, long enough to

"The better for a good kitchen apron."— *Page* 98.

cover her nicely. But that's neither here nor there. These things are for the *heathen*, and they'll get them in one shape or another; make 'em and see."

And behold, it came to pass, that when the young ladies held their annual fair of worsted dogs, and cats, sitting on bright worsted cushions, and tidies, Miss Priscilla had a corner of the room and a big table devoted to the use of the aprons, and dish-towels, and stockings, and holders. And whatever got possession of the people, whether it was the novelty of seeing something really useful for sale at a fair, or whether Miss Priscilla had awakened in their hearts some of her enthusiasm, or whether it

was an answer to some of her earnest prayers up there in that little back room, certain it is that by eleven o'clock, not a towel, or apron, or mitten, or holder was left. Miss Priscilla counted her gains with quiet satisfaction, and the next day made a deposit in the First National bank.

"It is for the heathen, Mr. Merchant," she explained. "Can it be entered in their name and be drawing interest, while I am at work gathering up what is to go with it?"

"So you have deserted the enlightened people of our city as hopeless, have you?" laughed Mr. Merchant, as he counted the dimes and five-cent bits and

"We'll give you five per cent interest on this."— *Page* 105.

coppers. "Well, I guess you are wise, the heathen will make better returns. Yes, we'll give you five per cent interest on this."

"The heathen are everywhere," was Miss Priscilla's brief comment as she took her bank-book and departed. Every "man, woman and *child*." That had been her promise, and she kept it bravely.

All the children were organized into a society which was called the "Penny Club." Not a child in the city who could by any shadow of reason be counted among the children of the church, but belonged to Miss Priscilla's club; all were pledged to give, some of them a penny a day, some of them a penny a week,

and a few of them a penny a month, according to their several degrees of wealth or poverty. Each of them was to earn this money for himself, and those who were too poor to expect payment from their own families, were fitted out with scraps from many jackets and trousers that had accumulated in Miss Priscilla's back room, and instructed how to make pen-wipers for the million. The boys were set to whittling, and many a neat spool-holder and thimble-stand were whittled out that would never have been thought of, but for Miss Priscilla's wits. All these things found their place at the fair, and found sale besides.

"If people will go to fairs to spend

The " Penny Club."—*Page* 105.

their money," said Miss Priscilla, as she fastened a ticket of price on each little pen-wiper and whittled article—"why *let* 'em, I'm willing; here's something for 'em to buy."

And they bought them.

Every child in the congregation reported her pennies and her earnings to Miss Priscilla on certain days of the week, each having her special day, and each kept a bit of a book—made by folding a half-sheet of paper a number of times and putting a stitch of bright thread through it—and each child made her entry in neat school-hand or crooked capitals, according to the degree of education acquired; and nothing flourished

better, or was productive of more fun to the young people themselves, than Miss Priscilla's "Penny Club."

As for the money they pledged, and the money which they earned and brought that they had *not* pledged, Miss Priscilla — large faith though she had — was amazed at the amount! As she ran her eyes over the rows and rows of pennies, and five-cent pieces, and dimes, and marked how they swelled and how they footed up, she murmured:

"Who would have thought that a few pennies gathered together, would make so many! If the world was at work in a penny club for missions, we could pay the everlasting debt of the foreign

boards. A penny a day! I declare I'm equal to that, myself; now multiply me by a few million of people, and how rich and powerful I am! How those boards exist, being forever 'overdrawn' is more than I can understand. Still, I'm free to confess that *I* don't want to go around with a subscription to help make 'em even! not yet awhile, anyhow."

CHAPTER V.

ATTAINS TO THE SPEECH-MAKING ERA.

DON'T suppose that there were not in our church, those who met Miss Priscilla half-way with eager hearts, and open pockets; there were many who had felt as she did, and who knew the meaning of sacrifice; in trifling ways, indeed, but it is the trifling sacrifices that pinch. One can do a

great thing now and then, that he knows people will admire, even though he has no such selfish motive in doing it, still it helps, and cheers, to know that an appreciative world looks on and says: "That was well done!" But to go without a new dress all winter — to go to church, and to society, and occasionally to a tea-party, wearing the cashmere or alpacca that has done duty as best for two years, and do it for the sake of the church, and say nothing about it, and know that people are ignorant of the reason, and feel that they are wondering whether you are aware that your dress really begins to look "rusty"— that is sacrifice.

There *were* those young couples who quietly gave up the money laid aside for concert tickets, and lecture tickets, and even a new book now and then, gave them up with a little sigh to be sure, and yet they hid even the sigh from each other, and said cheerily: "It is only for one winter; when we get out of debt we shall feel so much better." Such people had faith in Miss Priscilla; they believed that the debt would be paid; weren't they helping to the best of their ability with prayerfully enlightened consciences? There were those who went down lower than that; and cut off the meat bill, and had hashes for dinner oftener, and codfish balls,

and now and then baked potatoes and milk gravy, and no meat at all, or apology for meat, because they wanted the church debt paid; such people *knew* it would be paid. There were tender little places too in Miss Priscilla's work; there was a mother who sat and thought, after she had given her little contribution, (all she could afford,) and wiped the tears that dropped slowly down her cheeks, and Miss Priscilla waited, and wondered, and felt not at liberty to go lest there was something left unsaid that this mother wanted to say; and finally the mother arose hastily and went to her bureau drawer, and unlocked it, and drew from under piles of clothes a

little box and unlocked that with a tiny key she carried, and drew forth what? A gold chain and clasps? a diamond ring? a jeweled bracelet? Oh, no! a little wooden Noah's ark, with the paint fresh on the animals, and a look of newness about it all, though it had lain there for months.

"This was my little Jamie's," she said: "He had it only a day or two before he went away; he loved it best of anything he had; and he was so careful as he handled it, that there isn't a spot on anything, nor a scratch; I never could bear to think of any other fingers touching it; but I believe I'll give it to you; you can put it on that

toy-table you are going to have for the children; put Jamie's name on it, and maybe somebody will buy it for his sake; he would like to be counted in with the children if he were here, and he shall, the darling;" and then the mother broke down utterly, and wept in bitterness of soul, because of the aching emptiness of her mother-heart; and the father looked on with quivering lip, and eyes that dimmed constantly, and presently he drew his old-fashioned silver watch from his pocket, unfastened the black cord, and drew from it a silver half dollar with a hole drilled in it.

"Here," he said with husky voice; "I will not let *you* do all the sacrific-

ing Mary; this is Jamie's half dollar, he had it when he was a baby, and he wore it for a watch as long as he lived. I have worn it since, but I'll give it as Jamie's share towards the church."

And he dropped the shining thing into the box with Noah's ark, and then walked to the window and turned his back on them both, and leaned his head on the glass, and struggled for calmness. And *that* was *sacrifice!*

"God bless you!" murmured Miss Priscilla, and her voice was choked so that she could say no more; indeed, she had no more to say. She went away at once; went home to her own little,

"That was sacrifice!"—*Page* 118.

dark room; she threw off her bonnet and her rubbers, and then she laid the box on her poor little bed and opened it, and got down before it and she said:

"O Lord, thou seest this Noah's ark and this half dollar; thou knowest little Jamie, he is safe in thine arms this minute; here are his gifts to our church. Lord bless Jamie's gift; bless his father and mother with a blessing that shall be pressed down, and running over in their hearts; and bless our church—thy church Lord — bought with thy precious blood; honor our efforts, forgive our mistakes, forgive the efforts that we *don't* make, and make it all end for thy glory, Amen."

After that, Miss Priscilla knew that the cause was won.

So the winter passed; not for one day did this woman's faith, or feet falter, or her courage fail; she tramped and talked, and planned, and worked, and saved, and prayed; and finally presented herself one morning at the door of the First National Bank, and with brisk movements produced from her pocket the note that Mr. Merchant had given her; made out according to his humor precisely as she had dictated: "Payable the 27th day of April, 18—at ten o'clock, A. M."

"Read that," she said briefly. "Remember it?"

"I do certainly, Miss Hunter."

"All right then; it's the twenty-seventh day of April, I suppose you know; and it is ten o'clock A. M., and here I am, waiting."

"But there is a clause to the note that you overlook; I was not to be asked for it you will remember; unless the entire sum of five thousand dollars had been collected."

"How do you know I overlook it? My eyesight is good, (when I get on my glasses,) and my memory is, without 'em. It's all right of course, or I wouldn't be here; count out your three hundred if you please; for I'm in a

tremendous hurry; there is a great deal to do to-day."

I shall not attempt to describe to you the dazed way in which Mr. Merchant retired behind his desk, and the puzzled air with which he said as he handed Miss Priscilla the three hundred dollars in crisp bank notes:

"I've no doubt this is all right, Miss Hunter. I would trust you with my entire purse, you know."

"Of course it is," she said, answering the first part of the sentence. "I shall be after that money for the heathen, in a few days; now, it is time they were looked after; I want to leave it as

long as I can though, for the sake of the interest."

And then she tramped off.

In a marvelously short time after this payment was made, considering the number of things that were done in the interim, there came a day when the entire congregation of our church was called together on a week day, to hear a report concerning the church-debt. There was never a fuller meeting of our congregation; all the people from the country were there, and all the children were there, and those who had been for some time too feeble to go to church were there; and a general air of expectation prevailed.

The meeting was called to order and Mr. Merchant was elected chairman. His opening speech was *not* a brief one. He referred to the church-debt, which certainly everybody knew about; he dwelt on the disgrace which it had been to them for so long, which everybody understood; he referred to their sister, Miss Priscilla Hunter, and the self-sacrificing spirit which she had shown, and the marvelous work which she had accomplished. And he did not hear how that self-sacrificing sister who sat away back in a dark corner of the church under the gallery, muttered to herself:

"Bah! leave that part out."

So he continued to enlarge upon it, till she declared afterwards, that if it hadn't been for fear of helping to contract another church-debt, she could have jumped through the stained glass window. But at last he *did* reach the actual report:

"Debt, five thousand four hundred and sixty-two dollars."

Every child in the church knew those figures.

"Received on subscription four thousand four hundred and twenty dollars; proceeds from young ladies fund, donated voluntarily, two hundred and eighty-seven dollars; proceeds from chickens, butter, eggs, milk, cabbage,

potatoes, cheese, pork, and other articles of produce, donated by our country friends, and sold by Miss Hunter at the highest market prices, one hundred and thirty-two dollars. Proceeds from livery horses *not* hired, and oysters *not* bought, and wines *not* ordered by our young men: two hundred and seventeen dollars; proceeds from *smoke*, one hundred and sixty-nine dollars and eighty cents. Children's fund, earned by themselves, in the penny-club, three hundred and twenty-four dollars, and thirty-six cents. Proceeds from work done for the benefit of the heathen, two hundred and sixty-nine dollars and thirty-five cents.

This amount, Mr. Merchant proceeded to explain, he was instructed by their Sister Hunter to say, had been raised in the confident expectation that there would be some in their church, who, in refusing to provide for their own household, would be "worse than the heathen," according to Scripture. But she desired to take this occasion to offer her apology for having thought so meanly of her brethren and sisters. It had come to pass, that the heathen had all been converted! Not one remained in their borders; not a name in the entire congregation but was represented on the subscription list. Therefore, the sum total of this collection is:

"Five thousand eight hundred and nineteen dollars and fifty-one cents! leaving a surplus in the treasury, of three hundred and fifty-seven dollars and fifty-one cents."

Before he sat down he would say that Miss Hunter and others equally interested, hoped to see the surplus appropriated without delay, to the repairing of the parsonage drain, and pump, and woodshed, and the building of a new fence in front of the parsonage.

Sanctuary though it was, and in the presence of deacons, elders, board of trustees, and dignitaries of all sorts — when this report was concluded the small boys began to stamp, and, some way, nobody

seemed disposed to stop them. Instead, the older ones — some of them — followed this example, encouraged by the waving of many handkerchiefs, in the hands of the ladies.

Who could help it? The reproach of Israel was taken away, and the parsonage was to have a new fence! Actually we had money in our pockets with which to pay for that fence! We were free! If we had only been a poor church, struggling for existence, and had made such a noble lift as this, how proud we could have been!

"But as it is" — said Miss Priscilla, when I called on her the next morning to talk over all these wonderful results —

"Mr. Merchant with his hundred thousands, and Mr. Ritchie with his stocks and bonds, and Mr. Hoardwell with his real estate and taxes, were about the only ones who bubbled over into speeches about 'our noble effort.' For my part, I can't see that we have done anything but our duty; and the shame is, that we didn't do it long ago, without any fuss. Some of our folks, though, have done *more* than their duty; they have been generous, and can afford to rejoice. If I had a hundred thousand dollars and had given one hundred of it, and my neighbor next door was working by the day at two dollars, and had given ten of 'em, somehow I don't believe I should

"I can sew in peace now."—*Page* 135.

have felt like making a big speech about 'our sacrifices.' But that's neither here nor there. Speeches don't hurt anybody, especially after the work is done, and some folks like to make 'em. Let 'em do it I say; I'm willing to listen. The debt is *paid*, anyhow, and that old clattering fence around the parsonage that has been a regular thorn sticking into every bit of flesh on my body, is to come *down!* You better believe that I'm glad of it! I can sew in peace, now, and I'll burn two lamps at once, every night for a week. See if I don't!"

THE END.

My daughter Susan. — *Frontispiece.*

MY DAUGHTER SUSAN.

CHAPTER I.

PLANNING A CAMPAIGN.

THAT was the term by which I had always heard her mother designate her, and I had heard the term a great many times. It seems to be necessary for Mrs. Carleton to speak often of her daughter. I had never met

the young lady, but I had a general idea of how she looked and acted. When I complimented Mrs. Carleton on the extreme evenness of her machine stitching, she was sure to reply:

"My daughter Susan runs the machine for me; she sews very nicely."

If I commented on the delicacy of her sponge-cake, instantly I heard the refrain:

"Yes, my daughter Susan rarely makes a mistake in her cake."

If I said anything about the exquisite neatness that prevailed, in the sitting-room, where several little children were allowed full play, my friend would reply with a satisfied air:

"My daughter Susan always had a

faculty for keeping things straight; I never could understand how she did it."

Once I called for my friend to go on an important commission which had been intrusted to us, and as we passed down the street, I said:

"I was fearful that you would not be able to go. Mr. Carleton said that your little Faye was not quite well."

"Oh," the mother answered with a relieved air and smile, "my daughter Susan is at the helm; Faye is quite willing to exchange me for her, at any time."

"What a blessed comfort a quiet, domestic, elderly daughter must be; fashioned like that sensible Susan of Mrs. Carleton's!"

This I said to my husband one evening, as I fretted a bit over some jar in our domestic machinery.

"Now Mrs. Carleton never has any trouble; *her* sewing, and her housekeeping, and her nursery arrangements move like clock-work; all because she has an elderly, sensible, homely daughter, who is not the fashion, and has no inclination to be. Really, I think there is more comfort to be taken with that sort of daughter, than any other."

"Did you ever see Miss Carleton?" my husband asked, wheeling around to me with his necktie half arranged.

"No, I never did; queer, isn't it? but I know precisely how she looks and acts;

"Did you ever see Miss Carleton?"— *Page* 10.

doesn't her mother quote her to me on every useful and commonplace occasion?"

My husband turned back to his necktie with a queer smile on his face, and the sententious remark:

"When you make the young woman's acquaintance, I should like to hear from you again."

The fact of my not having met Miss Susan is easily explained. Her mother and I were watering-place acquaintances; we had grown intimate during our enforced absence from home, and discovering that our homes were in the same city, we, on our return, continued the intimacy. At the time of which I write, we had been at home but a few weeks, and

my calls at the Carleton mansion had all chanced to be made at hours when the elder daughter was either absent, or specially engaged.

One sunny morning I dropped into my friend's nursery and chatted with her until their dinner bell rang. "Come down to dinner," the lady said with that cordial cheeriness of tone which carries a sense of hospitality in it; "we are quite alone, and my daughter Susan will be glad to meet you; she was remarking the other day that she ought to know you. She is in the dining-room now, I presume, giving a general oversight to things; she generally goes down ten minutes or so before the bell

rings; sometimes indeed, she spends her morning there; she likes to have things arranged just right."

As we descended those basement stairs, I found myself wishing for the hundredth time, that I had a "daughter Susan," or an elderly, sensible, useful relative of some sort; one who was grey-eyed and pug-nosed, and short-waisted, and round-shouldered, and thoroughly good and wise about kitchens, and nurseries, and cellars, and garrets, and all the bewildering train of responsibilities which come under the general name of housekeeper's duties.

How did I happen to form that idea of this useful young lady's personal ap-

pearance? Well, really now, I hardly know. Why is it that when one hears of a thoroughly efficient young woman, one instinctively has an idea of a rather ungraceful, untasteful, shy, silent creature? I wonder if it can be because our pretty, graceful, tasteful, talkative girls, are not inclined to be efficient about useful things?

Miss Susan's very name impressed me; had it been Evelyn, or Alice, or had it been Mamie, or Fannie, or even Susie, I should perhaps have gotten a different idea; but the round, solid, uncompromising sound of "Susan" I found left its impression.

My meditations were broken in upon

by the sound of Mrs. Carleton's voice with a touch of motherly pride in it, as she introduced: "my daughter Susan." Round-shouldered, and short-waisted! — the lady who turned quickly from the re-disposal of some dish and gave me cordial greeting, was shapely enough, and graceful enough, even in the plainness of her morning dress, to have graced her mother's elegant parlor instead of her kitchen. I noticed her nose at once; I always do, why, it would perhaps be difficult to tell; but there wasn't the slightest touch of pug to it, and she had those clear strong eyes, of a peculiar shade of brown, that indicate strength and sweetness.

From that introduction, "my daughter Susan" became a curious study to me, and it is certain little outgrowths from that study, which I wish to present to you.

I was not long in discovering that nature had intended the young lady for a leader, that she could influence minds with which she came in contact, by the force of her stronger will. Such being the case, the important question was: how did she please to influence those minds? I studied her to try to discover.

Her wonderful executive ability was another element that gave her power. She could accomplish more in one day than any other woman that I ever knew.

Watching her, it appeared that half the secret lay in her habit of planning ahead. She carried out a half dozen schemes at once. This faculty shone conspicuously in all the minor household duties which fell to her lot. Did she have occasion to go up to her mother's room, it seemed to flash upon her that she should pass the jelly closet on her way, and that certain jellies would be needed for dinner, and that the linen closet was just across the hall, and piles of clean table drapery lay ready to be sent there, which might as well go then; and a book that her mother would be inquiring for, was on the parlor table, she would just take it along. And little

Ted's tin horse she noticed on a shelf in the back kitchen; he would be sure to want it, she would step there, and take it up to him. Thus her one journey accomplished half a dozen errands, and her descent was equally triumphal. After a few days of careful watching, it ceased to be a wonder to me, that everybody in that house, from the father, down to young Tim, the errand boy, called after, depended upon, and quoted, "my daughter Susan."

One well remembered day, several things happened to make the peculiar traits of this young lady shine out with remarkable clearness.

Of the events of that day, you shall

have a brief history. It was a long day,—in fact, it began the evening before; my family being absent, I was invited to spend the time with my friend. On the morning after my arrival at the Carleton homestead as I made my toilet, I remember wondering how Miss Susan would look in a morning wrapper, and if her hair would be in crimps, or how? I went down-stairs early, and quietly, knowing that my habits were earlier than my friend's, and fearing lest I might disturb others of the family, but Miss Susan was in the back parlor, all the windows open, a gay handkerchief tied over her head, and a duster in her hand.

"I'm almost through," she said, greeting me with a sunny smile, "and I'll give you a comfortable spot in two minutes; I'm belated this morning."

"You are dressed for the street," I said in an inquiring tone, as I noticed her trim walking suit. "If it is for a morning walk, may I accompany you?"

She laughed gaily. "I must see to the cakes, and the beefsteak, I am afraid instead of walking out for my health. Irish Nellie doesn't succeed in quite meeting father's ideas as yet, in regard to those two items, though I have hopes of her. However I presume I shall go soon after breakfast; something generally occurs to send me out, of a

morning; I am errand girl in general for this establishment. You are looking inquiringly at my street dress; I long ago gave up the practice of wearing wrappers; it required too many dressings."

"Did you give up the crimping pins for the same reason?" I asked her, as she untied and shook out the gay handkerchief, and I saw that her hair was neatly and smoothly coiled.

"Well, yes;" she answered brightly; "at least, I don't indulge in them very often; they are a sort of luxury that I keep for great occasions; father thinks them so very unbecoming, in the chrysalis state, you know, and one likes to appear well before one's *father*."

We were just up from breakfast, when the door bell gave a quick, sharp ring, and a young gentleman was ushered into the sitting-room. He had inquired for Miss Susan, and she was promptly forthcoming; a large bib apron of neutral tinted calico, which protected her dress, not having been removed.

"Good morning, Frank," she greeted him, genially; and then, as if time pressed: "Is everything right for this evening?"

"Not exactly;" he answered, with a nervous little laugh; "on the contrary, I am in the mood to feel that everything is wrong; I don't know what you will say to it; they have ordered wines, among their refreshments."

Miss Carleton mused. —*Page* 27.

"Indeed! who has?"

"Well, young Saunders and Mr. Templeton are the leaders; I learned of it by accident, and it is, or *was* the intention to keep the matter quiet from some of us."

Miss Carleton mused; her brown eyes seemed browner and larger than ever; she picked a bit of paper into tiny bits, while she thought, and then, when ready to speak, threw them energetically into the grate. "Frank let's consider ourselves insulted."

"Which will require no very great strength of the imagination;" he answered quickly; "I am sure I feel so; but the question is, what can we do about it?"

"The first thing that occurs to me, is, something that we *won't* do. We won't go, shall we?"

"Why, if you say not; but can you manage that? Aren't you pledged to sustain the entertainment?"

"By no manner of means, am I," with a quick flash from the brown eyes, "my acceptance of the invitation was under the supposition that the inviters were *gentlemen*, this proves to be a mistake."

"My daughter!" interposed the mother's expostulating voice,—"Isn't that being a little too severe?"

"I don't see that it is, mother; in these times, and especially when some

of the invited guests are known to have taken very strong ground in regard to the use of liquors, to produce them for entertainment seems to me not much short of insult."

"But, my dear, could you not hope to make a change in the programme of refreshments? Is that matter beyond your control?"

"It does not come within our line of work, mother; and indeed if we could, by special petition, succeed in prevailing on the gentlemen to show ordinary courtesy to us, I don't think we are either of us in the mood to petition. We would rather show that we believe ourselves to have been dis-

courteously treated. Am I right, Frank?"

"Of course you are; you always are, for that matter; and yet," then he hesitated."

"Well, and yet, what? You see trouble in the distance, what is it?"

"Why, I see those for whom we are just now specially anxious, led into mischief with this thing. Led farther, because, *you*, for instance, are not to be there to help them."

"That is it," chimed in the mother. "By making an effort to have the objectionable feature removed, you save some, or at least you have the opportunity to try to save some, who are

perhaps, too weak to resist temptation; don't you see?"

"Mother, I *don't see.* If this were the only party we need expect for the entire season, and a successful effort to suppress wine, or champaigne, or any other of the forms which the creature takes — How many shapes does it appear in, Frank?— would suppress it for the entire season, your suggestion would be better; but *don't* you both see that showing our willingness to be counted in with such company, and honor their invitations, provided they will not use liquors in our presence, enters no protest against their doing it on any of the hundreds of occasions when we are ab-

sent? What I want, is, to show Mr. Saunders and Mr. Templeton and others of their stamp, that we propose to associate with *gentlemen*."

"I see your point," said the young gentleman. "But Susan, I am trembling for Charlie Davis and Leonard Burton and half a dozen others; Fred Harrison for instance, perhaps more than any of them. What can we do?"

Miss Susan chewed thoughtfully at the end of the lead pencil in her mouth, and tried in an absent way to fit her toe to one of the triangles of the carpet, and said nothing; while the young man watched her, as though she had been the President, and he was

awaiting an appointment. As for the mother, she regarded her daughter with a half-anxious, half-proud air, and then turning to me said in a sort of apologizing tone: "The child does go to such lengths! one never knows what to expect next."

At last Miss Susan looked up with a bright flash of triumph in her eyes. "Frank," she said, "can't we be revenged on them for spoiling our pleasure in this inconsiderate way? Suppose we break up the party for them, and preach an excellent sermon on temperance thereby."

"How?"

"Oh, in a dozen ways. I think of

seven young men, most of them in danger, whom I believe I can pledge to write notes of declinature; not only that, but I believe they will state why they decline. Now of course that rather depends on whether you will be responsible for as many young ladies; you are equal to seven young ladies, aren't you, Frank?"

The dismayed look on the said Frank's face, caused Miss Susan to break into a merry laugh; which, however, she checked almost immediately as she said: "I assure you I don't feel like laughing. I am indignant! The idea, that we, just after the temperance movement here, and the stand that we have taken,

should appear to be made party to such proceedings as this!"

"I know it. But Susan do you believe your plan will succeed? gentlemen are sensitive where their invitations to special ladies are concerned; and besides, some of those who are most in danger, will take offense the quickest at the thought that they are not strong enough to withstand a whole avalanche of temptation. Are you sure you can accomplish this thing, if you undertake it?"

"No," she answered, in perfect good-humor. "Not at all; I don't know whether it will work, or not; and what is more, I never *shall* know until I try. There has many a thing been accom-

plished in this world, that never would have been, had people settled it in their minds that it couldn't be done, before they had made vigorous efforts to *do* it. What I *am* sure of, is, that I mean to try. Now, do you?"

"Go ahead, general," he said with a queer smile on his face, "I'm your obedient servant."

Before the two parted, Miss Susan had made out a list of names for each of them. Names of persons who were to be influenced, if possible, to withdraw their acceptance of invitations to an entertainment gotten up by the young gentlemen of the rival literary society.

CHAPTER II.

OUT ON DUTY.

"YOU are an intense temperance woman, I see;" I said, smiling on Miss Susan, as having laid aside her bib-apron she made ready for a walk.

"No ma'am, I'm not. I'm simply reasonable. I don't know that I feel more intense about temperance matters, or at least that I exhibit any more zeal about

them, than I do about the clothes I shall wear, or a dozen other things that might be mentioned. There are a great many duties which take time, and planning, and trouble. Can't you go down town with me? mother is to be engaged with the dressmaker, and the morning is lovely for a walk."

As this was precisely what I wanted; namely, to see what Miss Susan would do next, and how she would do it, I was prompt in my acceptance. The same characteristics which marked her movements from room to room, attended the preparation for this walk.

"Mother," she called at the foot of the stairs, "I shall have to pass Mrs

She caught up little Faye for a parting kiss. — *Page* 41.

Seymour's, while I am down town; do you want that pattern returned?"

"Yes, indeed, daughter," came the gratefully toned answer from her mother's room. "I am very glad you thought of it."

Then Miss Susan put her head in at the door of the sewing-room:

"Miss Perry, I have to go down town; do you want me to match the silk you spoke of?"

"Oh, yes, if you will be so kind," was the grateful answer.

On her way up-stairs she caught up little Faye for a parting kiss, and whispered that "sister had the dolly's measure and was going to stop and

have some kid slippers cut this very morning."

When we were fairly started, I noticed that she had a tiny bouquet of home-blossomed flowers in her hand.

"I'm just going to call at Mrs. Smith's door with these, she said; she is sick, you know, and she is a great lover of sweet smelling flowers."

Now Mrs. Smith was the wife of a reformed drunkard who lived in a certain little tumble-down house, down a certain narrow lane of the city. We were but a few squares from the Carleton homestead, when my young lady halted with a cheery smile and bow, having previously made hurried explanation to me.

"There is Charlie Davis! how fortunate, I expected to have gone half a mile out of my way to see him."

"Good morning Charlie, you are just the person I want to see; I need you to help me be indignant."

"What's up?" asked Charlie.

"You haven't heard then? I don't believe you could guess."

And there followed a rapid explanation as to the new developments connected with the proposed entertainment. Miss Susan talked eagerly, throwing animation and indignation into her tones, and closed with: "Did you ever hear of treating ladies in that manner, I consider myself personally insulted."

"Oh, but I am sure nothing was further from their intentions."

It was Charlie's turn to be eager now, something in his tone and manner making me feel almost certain that he was not hearing of the plan for the first time.

"It is greatly to be deplored then, that their acts should have fallen so far below their intentions."

This was Miss Susan's quick response, given in a tone slightly tinged with sarcasm.

Charlie essayed to explain.

"Well, now you know there are always some who must have their taste of such things, or they think they are not having refreshments at all; but I

can assure you that it will not be produced in a manner that will be in the least offensive to the ladies."

"No, Charlie! certainly I didn't know any such thing. I mean of course among the gentlemen with whom we associate. I hope I do not number among *my* friends, any who consider liquors a necessity to their proper entertainment, because then of course I could never entertain them. However, there will be no danger of any insult being offered to me this evening; I shall take care not to put myself in a position where that would be possible."

"Miss Susan you surely are not going to withdraw your acceptance! the committee depend upon you."

"They are very foolish. I don't see how they can expect my presence in the face of these developments. Charlie, is it possible that you will attend! Do you mean to insult your temperance principles in that way? I didn't think it of you."

Charlie began to look very much embarrassed.

"Well, you know," he said slowly, "there is a lady in the case, I can hardly do otherwise."

"You can hardly do otherwise than to give her a chance to escape an unladylike position. I hope you don't consider my friend Allie the sort of lady who would like to have her name associated

with anything so questionable? Why, I thought you would resent it on her account. Gentlemen have strange ideas of *ladies*, it seems."

Charlie's face grew momently longer.

"Do you really think that Alice will regard it in that light?" he asked, doubtfully. "You know you are — well now, Miss Susan, you *are* perhaps, just a trifle extreme on that point. I don't think Alice would mind, so long as the thing wasn't of my planning."

"Try her," replied Miss Susan, with a sagacious nod of her shapely head. "If you and she when you talk the matter over together, don't come to the same conclusion that I have, why I

shall be very much disappointed in you both; that is all."

"Is your friend Alice so decidedly in sympathy with you that she is ready to give up a party for the cause?" I asked, as we bowed our adieus to Charlie, and passed on.

"She is, by this time; that is, if Frank Holden has seen her, as I sincerely hope and trust he has; I asked him to make his first call on her. She is one of those pretty, softly, little ladies, having no idea of deciding a question for herself. She always has some one in view whom she determines shall act as her conscience for the time being; and just at present I occupy that impor-

She is one of those pretty, softly, little ladies. —*Page* 48.

tant post; so when she hears of my decision, she will be as staunch a little temperance woman as one need desire."

At this point, Miss Susan drew a quick little sigh.

"Oh dear me!" she said:

"If girls *would only* take strong ground on this subject and keep it, I believe we could reform the world. Why, just look at it, every woman owns a little piece of the world; *I* do, so does everybody, why *can't* each one look out for her own little corner?"

"But what could they do?"

"Do! dear me! First, there are things that I want them to *stop* doing. I

want the daughters all over the world to join hands, and say they will not — they absolutely *will not* walk, ride, talk, with a man who buys or sells, or *votes* for the sale of anything that will intoxicate. I want them to stick to this position, in the face of all opposition; all roughness, and coarseness, about 'petticoat government,' or 'leading strings,' or 'old maid warnings.' We have had isolated and spasmodic action in this direction, but if we could have a banded-together, a concerted action all over the country, and at the same time be working with a will for the reformation of the poor fellows who are trying to be men, *don't* you see that

in time there would have to be results?"

"In other words, don't I see that the young ladies very largely control the young men of this world? Yes, practically I think they do, or could. But have you any hope of enlisting a large number of young ladies under your banner?"

"Oh, as to that, I don't know; I *hope* a great deal, and work towards my aim all the time, and rejoice over every new recruit, and believe that—"

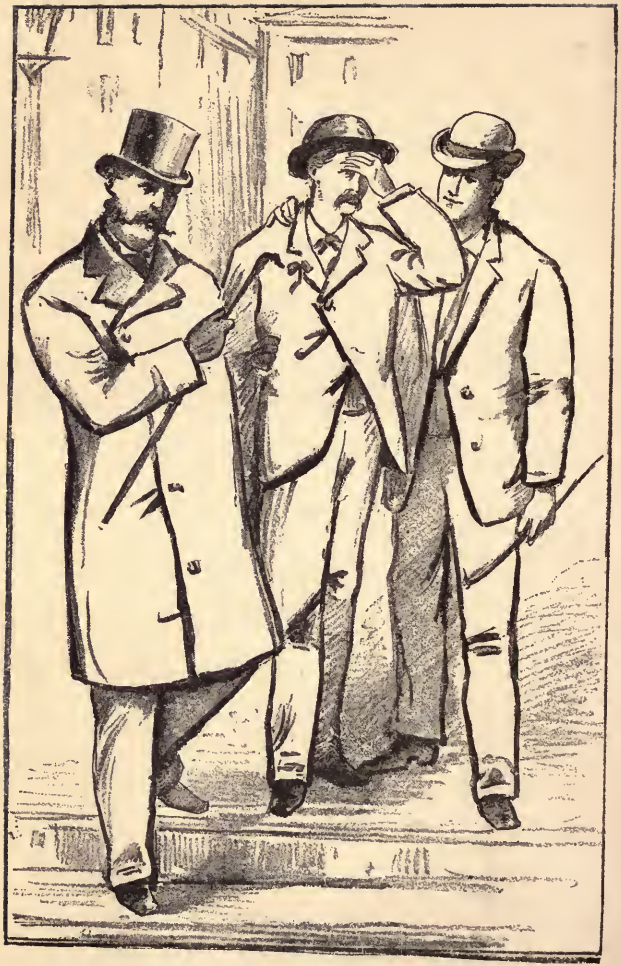
At this point we were interrupted; being met by apparently a most thoroughly finished gentleman; at least, so far as dress, and air, and bow were concerned; he almost halted before us

as one who would not be at all averse to other than the ordinary passing greetings, and his tone was suavity itself, as he bowed his "good morning, Miss Carleton."

Miss Carleton paused in the midst of her sentence to me, raised her clear strong eyes, looked the gentleman fully in the face, and walked past him with head erect and not the movement of a muscle.

"Wasn't that Senator Grainger's son?" I asked, amazed at so complete an ignoring of his presence.

"Yes'm it was; and a man capable of greater meanness I do not know on the face of the earth. Only last even-



Teasing and tantalizing. — *Page* 55.

ing I heard of his telling with much laughter, how poor Timmy Baker had signed the pledge for the thirteenth time, and how *he* laid a wager with Dick Morris, that Timmy would break his thirteenth pledge all to pieces before he reached home, and then the interesting story was told of their following him to the nearest corner-grocery, and teasing and tantalizing the weak, liquor-crazed brain, until he took just one sip to please them, and went home 'as gloriously drunk as possible!' That is the way in which the refined account concluded. That man to have the impudence to bow to me! I wouldn't speak to him if he were the President of the

United States, and I was to be hanged to-morrow unless I asked *him* for a pardon! I despise the man, and wherever and whenever I can show him that I do, I mean to."

"But is that spirit in accordance with the charity which is long suffering, which 'hopeth all things,' and 'endureth all things,' my hot-hearted young lady?"

"Oh, now, dear madam, I give you credit for greater sense than to suppose you mean a word of that. There has been a sickly sentimentality of that sort talked until I know it by heart, and have as little patience with it, as with any form of the non-temperance

disease. In point of fact, you and I know, that Senator Grainger's son is not being ruined by lack of charity; he is much more likely to be ruined by thinking that he is such an irresistable fellow that nobody can withstand him. I believe in *charity*, of the sort too, which 'suffereth long,' and I know some sorrowful drunkards' wives and daughters who are living it. But there is a spurious kind that can be mis-*talked*, as well as misplaced. Look at Mr. Grainger now, across the street; that is Miss Harper he has joined, and she is simpering with him, showing herself flattered by his attentions, and he is leading her brother right

straight down to the gutter! On the whole, when I see such women as Miss Harper, I am for about five minutes discouraged."

"Why good morning, Mr. Miller; I am glad to see you out again,"

Miss Susan paused suddenly, stretching forth a neatly-gloved hand to grasp a somewhat rough one, ornamented with a frayed cuff and seedy coat sleeve. There followed a few minutes of pleasant talk, she stopping on the corner for the purpose. She inquired for his mother, and his sister, and as to whether he was strong enough for business, and finally said:

"Mr. Miller I have been looking for

"Good morning, Mr. Miller." — *Page* 58.

a call from you; haven't you made any calls since your illness?"

He stammered an unintelligible reply, and she gaily added:

"Remember, I'm not a friend of yours, a real good hearty one you know, until you call at my home expressly to see me; we shall be glad to welcome you there on almost any evening."

As we passed on, I said:

"If my eyes do not strangely deceive me, that is Dick Miller."

"That is Dick Miller," Susan replied, with a satisfied air and tone; "his very self, though he does not look much as he used to."

"And you stop on the street and

shake hands with him! and pass Senator Grainger's son without even deigning to bow! Well, Miss Susan, I don't know that I *have* great expectations of seeing the girls of this world follow your example; why I thought Dick Miller was pretty far down the road to the gutter?"

"Didn't you see his blue ribbon? he has joined the noble army of martyrs and is fighting, like the brave fellow that he is. Indeed, I shake hands with him on all occasions, and I am glad Mr. Grainger was in sight to see me do it. Dick Miller has a cordial invitation to my father's house, and will be welcomed there whenever he

chooses to call. And Mr. Grainger will be denied if he attempts it, which he will hardly do after to-day. I *will* have respectable men for my calling acquaintances."

CHAPTER III.

THE QUESTION ARGUED.

"DO you believe also in the blue ribbon movement?" I said inquiringly, as having revolved my friend's last statements for a few minutes, I concluded I would like further light.

"Oh, yes, why I believe in everything that works towards the end desired. I joined the blue ribbon people with heart

and hand, working with all my might. I am working in that same way now, and mean to continue so long as there is a yard of blue ribbon in the country; or, what would be better, so long as there is a man, woman or child in the country whose name is not on the total abstinence pledge."

"Perhaps you belonged also to the woman's crusade?"

"Perhaps I did," she said, laughing. "You would certainly have thought so if you could have seen the crowds I walked through and the condition of my dress when I reached home, occasionally, after a day's campaign. I was in the very thickest of it, I assure you."

"But, Susan, do you really believe that was the wisest way to attempt a reform?"

"Oh, as to that, I don't believe the wisest way has ever been attempted yet. What is more, I don't believe anybody knows exactly what the wisest way would be. There were flaws in the management of the crusade, and there are flaws in the Murphy movement, and the red ribbon movement, and every other movement. Dear me! so there are flaws in the management of churches, and schools, and banks, and benevolent organizations, and households. Who pretends to have found a perfect way for doing *anything?* Yet

who wants to give up living; or to lie down in a corner and groan over the flaws, and wait until he finds perfection before he labors? I am real tired of the people who, while professing to be friends of the temperance cause, spend their strength in crying out against everything that has been attempted, and yet take no pains to enlighten us as to a better way. If somebody will present a plan promising better results than any that has ever been tried, I'll join his ranks and follow to the ends of the earth, or the ends of this city, anyway. I'm not an advocate for any special *way*. I have signed at least a hundred temperance pledges since I was born, and

I presume I shall sign a hundred more. I don't care how often my name appears in such a connection. I wear a blue ribbon on my watch chain, and a white one on my muff, or fan, or whatever happens to be convenient. I'm a crusader, and a no-license woman, and I will be a voter, on that subject at least, if I ever get a chance. I'm anything, and *everything;* let us all work, I say, towards the best that we know how, and *some* good will come of it. When I can't have a thing as I want it, I come just as near to it as I possibly can, and go ahead."

All these eager sentences had not flowed on uninterruptedly. Instead, Miss

Mrs. Smith detained her. — *Page* 71.

Susan had given sudden dodges into this store, and around that corner, and had stopped twice to hold conversations. Once she said:

"Mrs. Smith's is down this lane, I'll just run down there and leave my 'posey.'"

And Mrs. Smith detained her to be grateful, and cry a little, and to say that:

"John held out yet, but was out of work, and she was afraid!"

"Out of work, is he? How does that happen?"

"Well, you see, ma'am, Mr. Jenkins had him for workman down at the distillery; and he said John talked too

much whine about the pledge and wasted his time, he couldn't have no such goings on about him, so he discharged him out and out. But that was only an excuse ma'am; John didn't waste his time, he has been that faithful that he has done overwork many a night; and everything he did was to labor to get the men to sign, and to vote the no-license ticket. That's everything in life, ma'am, that he is turned off for."

Miss Susan's face darkened:

"So he is 'persecuted for righteousness sake,' is he? Tell him the Master's direction is, to 'rejoice and be exceeding glad,' meantime he musn't be kept out of work. Just ask him to call

A gay-looking young man. —*Page* 75.

at my father's at six this evening, will you? I may have a message for him."

And receiving Mrs. Smith's profuse and tearful thanks, we left her and picked our way out of her lane, coming in contact at the corner with a gay-looking young man, whom my friend promptly stopped.

"Fred, have you heard the latest item of interest in the Delta society?"

Then followed a rapid explanation of the proposed addition to the evening's entertainment, closing with an eager:

"Fred, isn't this a capital opportunity to show those people that we are not to be trifled with? I propose to materially reduce their forces by withdrawing a

number of their special guests; we can do it with your help."

Whereupon, she rapidly detailed the plan; throwing no little anxiety into the closing question:

"Don't you believe it will work?"

"Work? of course it will, if we manage rightly; and it will be rare fun, too; I haven't heard of anything so gay in an age. *I'll* go into it with all my heart. My friend Edwards and his two sisters, yes, and for that matter their cousins will draw off, if I give them the hint; they're ripe for fun any time. I'll tell you what, Miss Susan, suppose we send in our cards of regret at about the same hour, so as to give them a

regular broadside, you know? What fun! and what idiots they were to give us such a chance as this!"

"Has that young man a very clear idea of the *conscientious* part of this matter?" I asked the young general-in-chief, as these interesting details having been arranged with apparent glee on both sides, we moved on.

She gave me a somewhat searching glance before she answered; if answer it could be called.

"What do you suppose St. Paul meant by being 'all things to all men?' That was Fred Harrison. Do you remember Frank spoke of being specially anxious for one young man. This is the one.

He would be, perhaps, the most sorely tempted to-night, of any of them; for the reason that he really *hasn't* a large amount of principle, and is so easily led. The predominant idea in his brain is *fun*. If somebody prevailed on him to think that the very funniest thing he could do would be to get intoxicated, I'm afraid he would proceed to doing it at once. Now, haven't I a right to appeal to the funny side of his nature, in order to get his help, and keep him out of danger? The sort of good-natured rivalry which has existed between the two societies for so long, facilitates our plans wonderfully. Neither Frank nor I care a pin's point about

the *societies*, as viewed in a literary light. Between you and me there isn't enough of that element in either of them, to keep them from sinking. But it helps our influence over both sides, to heartily 'belong' when occasion requires. Oh, I dare say it isn't the best way. Don't suppose I am going to waste my strength in championing it; only, while you are getting up a better way, I'll work at this, and keep mischief at bay for this one evening, if I can. Here is Carson's store; I must go in and get my dolly's slippers cut. Should they be red, do you think, or blue, or what?"

The returning of the pattern, and

the matching of the silk, and several errands growing out of ideas that seemed to be developing in Miss Susan's mind, involved much walking, and street-car riding. In one of the cars, she, standing with her hand hold of a strap, engaged in a low-toned conversation with the driver. "Don't talk of giving up," I heard her say, earnestly. "Only think Mr. Jones what that involves; what there is to go back to. You surely did not enjoy your former life."

"No more I did;" he said drearily; "but this is an awful temptatious life; hard to live; it's amazing hard to be fighting yourself all the time, ma'am."

"Indeed, it is. You need a helper.

"Don't talk of giving up." — *Page* 80.

It is so foolish in you to persist in fighting the battle all alone; when one who is 'mighty to save,' stands ready, waiting. When you will enlist under my captain and have him pledged to stand by you every moment, *every moment*, remember, you will find that more than half the fight is over."

"Humph!" said the poor fellow, with a sort of half-despairing doggedness coming over his face: "Why don't he help me if he can, and wants to?"

"Mr. Jones," she said, bending nearer, and speaking in that peculiar, low, forceful tone which carries weight with it: "You say I have helped you a little; could I have done it if you had not

been willing to accept my help? Could I have forced it upon you, against your *will*?"

A gleam of intelligence lighted the heavy face as he said with some degree of heartiness:

"That's true enough, ma'am; no more you couldn't."

As we were about to leave the car, the young lady drew from her pocket a slip of paper on which were a few printed words; she handed it to him, with a bow and smile.

"Was that a talisman?" I asked her.

"An invitation," she said, brightly. "Will you have one?" And she gave me a duplicate paper. It read: "Gos-

pel Temperance Meeting, City Hall, Tuesday evening. Good speakers; good music. Help for the tempted! Hope for the discouraged! Will you come?"

"*Do* they come?" I asked her.

"Scores of them, hundreds of them. Poor fellows! little we know what they have to withstand. Look at that man!"

We had suddenly gotten ourselves very near to a crowd of men; many of whom looked rough enough, though some were respectably dressed, and bore about them an air of superiority. We could hear touches of their conversation, or their urgings, for one man seemed to be the centre.

"Oh now, John, what's the use?"

said one, "You will never keep it in the world. A free life and a merry one, is my motto."

"He'll get no work!" shouted another, "unless he votes the license ticket. There's a lot of them fellows, and they are in dead earnest, I tell you. I heard say, they swore not a fellow as voted agin 'em should have a day's work in this town."

"Lots of whiskey, John, if you vote *for* 'em," wheezed the lowest, most repulsive looking man in the crowd.

"They'll treat all day, and it will be as free as water; — starvation if you don't, you know. Come, make up your mind to let the pledge go; bad luck

"Lots of whiskey, John, if you vote for 'em."—*Page* 86.

to it! Who cares for a baby pledge? Let's go in and take a drink to treat the resolution to be our own masters."

We had paused on the outer edge of this small crowd; I, because I was afraid to venture through it, and Susan, apparently, because she was fascinated. She listened eagerly to every word, and just at the point where the poor fellow whom they called "John," seemed to waver and look about him as one who was conquered in spite of himself, to my astonishment, and no small dismay, she pushed boldly forward into the midst of the group, which suddenly parted on either side as if to let her pass.

"Mr. Smith," she said. "What *utter*

nonsense are these men talking to you? Why do you stop to listen to such folly? No work, indeed! Do they suppose that all the men in this city who have work to give, are owned by the rum-sellers, and the rum-makers? No danger of any such calamity as idleness befalling honest men who are willing to work. Mr. Smith, *I* will see that you have employment by seven o'clock to-morrow morning, at good wages; and I promise you will not have to sell your vote in order to get it. You have the right to vote according to your own good sense, without being at the command of any man; you should stand up for that right. I wish you would

walk down to the bakery yonder with me? I want to send your sick wife something to tempt her appetite. Will you go?"

"Yes, ma'am, I will," he said sturdily.

And away we tramped, followed by the jeers of that crowd, some of whom were intoxicated, and some of whom were sober enough to urge the others on. We heard the cries of "petticoat sails," "old maid's apron strings," and other equally refined epithets.

"Mr. Smith," said Miss Susan, coolly, glancing back towards the crowd: "What do you think of being found with a class of fellows who insult me?"

"I think I'd like to *shoot* 'em," he said vindictively.

"No, don't do that;" she answered quickly: "Show yourself superior to them. Mr. Smith, I don't think your wife is quite so well this morning. She is very anxious over your troubles; if you should give up the struggle I am afraid it would kill her."

"I *won't* give up," he said under his breath; and he set his teeth hard, as one getting ready for mortal combat.

CHAPTER IV.

INCONVENIENT PRINCIPLES.

"I WANT to go away down on Vesey street," said Miss Susan, directly she had dispatched her man John with a basket of dainties to tempt the sick wife. "Are you equal to that journey, or shall I put you in that up-town car and send you home?"

"I am not to be sent home," I

answered promptly, "I am resolved to see this day out. It is one of the most astonishing days that I ever lived."

"I *have* some queer days," she said, smiling, "but this is a very quiet one. Did you see the look of disgust on the faces of those fellows when I pushed in? They expected me to be afraid; but I wasn't. I wish they *had* attempted violence, it would have been the salvation of John Smith. I should risk their having much influence over him, after that. However, they were kind enough to insult me, and that will have a good effect. Poor John Smith! he is really very anxious about that sick wife of his. He knows that the thing

she desires most on earth is, to see him a reformed man. Let alone, he would conquer; as it is, he needs the strength of an angel and the courage of a martyr. Isn't it an absolutely appalling thing, to think of there being laws made giving men the power to make a fiend of him, and murder his wife? Sometimes, that license business makes my blood just boil with rage, and at other times it is so sublimely ridiculous that I have to laugh. Once I went to a temperance lecture, given by an illiterate sort of man, but he used one illustration which has clung to me ever since. He imagined a party of men standing on the shore of a dangerous

stream, near the rapids, engaged in saving, or trying to save poor fellows who were whirling down the angry waters to destruction. He described the eagerness with which those on shore worked; the superhuman strength which the effort required, and the horror of the failures. Suddenly, it occurred to some man wiser than the rest, to rush up stream and see what all this meant; why so many men were being thrown down towards the rapids. Behold, up on the bridge stood a man who was *pitching* them in, one after the other, with the most composed and decorous air imaginable!"

"See here!" called the other, "stop

that! what are you about? don't you know enough to know that men are being drowned down there in the rapids? They have gone over, dozens of them; we couldn't save them. Are you mad? Stop! I say!"

"I won't," said the man in calm reply. "My friend, I've got a license. I can make money at this business. If I didn't work at it some one else would; I might as well have the money as any one. I'm licensed according to law. You've no right to stop me;" and in went a man!

"Now, of course a critic would say that the cases were not parallel, that illustration was far-fetched, and all that

sort of thing; *I* don't care how far it was fetched. It sometimes seems to me, that a few of us are just standing down by the rapids, trying to save a man here and there, while the law is at work licensing men to stand on the bridge and pitch them in. How I wish I could vote!"

"What good would it do? The women would all vote just as their husbands do, and what would be gained?"

"Now, my dear madam, you are always to remember that some of us haven't husbands; we, at least, could be supposed to have minds of our own. But what does that argument amount to? There is my father who votes

the 'no-license' ticket, with all his strength. If women could vote, there would be my mother, and my sister Alice and myself, to make his vote count four. Now, suppose for a moment, that he voted *for* license, — if you *can* suppose so impossible and absurd a thing. *Don't you think you see my mother, and my mother's daughters doing it?*

"Well, but," said I, "there is Joe Baker who lives down the lane from our house; he has a wife and four daughters, and he votes *for* license, and drinks all the liquor he can get."

"And do you imagine that they would cast five votes on *his* side? Let

me tell you, you don't know them if you think so. I do; and I know that they would lie down and die, in the attempt to reach the polls, if need be, and feel that they had not lived in vain, if they had cast five votes for freedom from their life curse. No ma'am, those who profess that the drunkard's wives, and sisters, and mothers, and daughters, would vote to have rum sold, show plainly that they don't know what they are talking about. There are doubtless a few miserable exceptions, women whom rum has so degraded that they have lost their womanhood; but the masses, if you want to know how

they would vote, visit them as I do, and hear them talk, and pray!"

"Do you believe that women ever *will* vote?" I asked her, branching from the argument at hand with the suddenness of a politician who had been worsted.

"Oh, *I* don't know. If we could have some new laws made, by which women might have the right to vote on such vital subjects as these, and yet not be voted for, (not be 'eligible to office,' you know, isn't that the word? for to most of the offices, neither nature nor culture leads them), I should like to vote. But if I've got to be made a senator of, or an assembly man-

woman of — or submit to any of those degradations, why, I'm afraid I should want to wait awhile. So far as the mere act of voting is concerned, I think an immense amount of twaddle has been written and spoken concerning it. I know some dainty little bits of flesh and blood, and silk and velvet, who lisp out that they 'wouldn't vote for the world! it would be stepping out of theirs phere; tho immodest you know, and degrading; calculated to dethtroy all thenth of delicathy and refinement!' and those same creations of refinement will dance half the night with men whom *I* won't recognize on the street. I *can* conceive of more immodest things than

Mr. Selmser. —*Page* 105.

the slipping of a bit of paper into a box."

"This is Vesey street; I want to go into Mr. Selmser's office."

"Mr. Selmser," she said, the moment she caught sight of that dignified looking gentleman. "Have you any vacant places for workmen?"

Mr. Selmser thought not.

"Well, now, you ought to have. Are you employing temperance men? Have they all signed the pledge?"

Well, really, as to that Mr. Selmser did not know; there were no drunkards among his workmen; he never submitted to that, but whether they were pledge signers was extremely

doubtful; the truth was, he didn't believe he had ever inquired.

"And you a president of a temperance society!" said Miss Susan, with just a touch of dignified surprise in her voice.

"Mr. Selmser, this thing needs looking after. The liquor party can afford to provide work for their men; they can afford it seems to buy their influence and their time, and their souls, by promising steady employment and good wages. Now the question is: what are we, on our side, about? Here is John Smith, actually thrown out of employment, because he has signed the pledge! and a chance for several others to be

served in the same way. Are we going to stand that?"

"Well, now, Miss Susan, what can we do about it?"

"Do about it! why, see that they have work, of course. Is there nothing in this city that ought to be done? no public improvements that would furnish work, and be a blessing to the people? I've passed at least three streets to-day, that need to have rows of old buildings pulled down and decent ones put up. The hovels in which those people on Clark street are living, are a disgrace to the city. And the park needs work done in it, and there are miles of road that need repairing, why of course all

these things cost money; and so do poor houses, and orphan asylums, and prisons."

To this rush of earnest words Mr. Selmser listened in a sort of embarrassed silence; and I could not help wondering whether Miss Susan knew, and whether he remembered, that most of the "hovels on Clark street," were owned by himself. Presently he rallied.

"Well, but Miss Susan, there are so few of the people having the means, who feel that way; we couldn't do one hundredth part of what needs to be done if we attempted it."

"Then we clearly should not be responsible for the one hundredth part,

should we? but simply for the part that we could do. God will not call me to account for *your* undone work, Mr. Selmser, only my own."

"This could not have been a new idea to Mr, Selmser; yet he seemed struck with it; and I was not surprised to hear several weeks thereafter, that a regular system had been put in operation, whereby any honest, unemployed man, who was a signer of a total abstinence pledge, could find employment and fair wages by applying to one of ten men, located at convenient portions of the city. The *immediate* result of this conversation was, that John Smith went to work the next morning at seven o'clock.

"We will have some lunch, now," said Miss Susan, as we turned from Mr. Selmser's office. "We are not likely to get home until after the dinner-hour."

"Very well," I said, "we are quite near a good place. Just around the corner on Mason street, is a restaurant where I occasionally lunch, I find very good accommodations."

"You can't mean the Mason parlors!" I detected surprise not unmingled with indignation in the voice of my young friend. In spite of which I was obliged to meekly admit, that I *did* mean the Mason parlors."

"Excuse me," she said, decidedly; "but I can't lunch there. Of course

you do not know that the back room belongs to them, and that they retail wines and beer, and indeed, anything in that line which is called for. They get no custom from me."

"But can you find a restaurant where something of that sort isn't sold?"

"Yes'm, one, at least; several for that matter. But the one nearest to us is on Lincoln street. Not a very stylish place; the fact is, they can't afford to be stylish, because they are not supported by rum; and because temperance people do not go out of their way to patronize them. But things are clean and neat."

"Isn't it nearly half a mile away?" I

asked, still speaking meekly, for I was getting some new ideas.

"Yes'm it is; but the street-car that we can take at the corner passes their door. Five cents and fifteen minutes will take us there. It isn't so convenient as the Mason parlors, you see. I think we often find principles inconvenient; don't you?"

To this question I made a sort of muttering reply; for I began to be dimly conscious that hitherto my principles had not been so "inconvenient," as they ought to have been. On two other occasions during that memorable day did I venture to offer advice, with unexpected results. As we were has-

tening from one line of cars to another, I espied the sign: "Burke's oyster depot." Aware that he kept the best oysters in the city, I asked: "Are you mindful of your mother's commission about oysters? Here is Burke's."

"We never buy at Burkes," she answered promptly.

"He is a liquor dealer, you know, as well as an oyster dealer. I am ever so sorry, for I like his oysters better than any that we find, — which is another wise thing that our temperance grocers submit to. The idea of letting a liquor dealer keep the best oysters in town! sometimes it really seems to me that the brains of this city are in Satan's

hands; and he certainly knows how to manage them."

I said nothing in reply, for the reason that my eye had caught sight of some unusually fine looking oranges.

"There!" I said, "you were looking for nice oranges, you will see none nicer than those I am sure."

Miss Susan stopped short in the street, and gave me a curious, troubled look, for a moment; then she laughed outright.

"Are you in that last named person's employ to-day, my dear madam?" she asked, "or is it pure accident that you continually direct my attention to restaurants, oyster-depots, groceries, etc.,

where the main article of dependence is rum?"

"Is this a rum establishment, too?" I asked in surprise. "How do you find those things out? they have no sign. I never even thought of it before."

"Which is precisely the difficulty with two-thirds of our temperance men and women;" she answered, with kindling eyes. "They don't think, and indeed, many of them *won't* think. It is not pure thoughtlessness in all cases, either, it is — well, what shall I call it? it looks wonderfully like indifference. It is 'more convenient' to trade at a rum-seller's; or, 'he keeps better articles;'

or, 'he is second cousin to some one's brother's uncle's cousin's friend!' some reason can be found why it is best to patronize him in spite of his want of principle. Indeed, I meet with not a few women who do not descend to particulars, but content themselves with that favorite argument among a certain class of Americans; 'fiddlesticks!' and in some respects it is really the most unanswerable argument that can be offered; because, after you have given what you consider to be an earnest, and practical reason on the other side,— what can you say to a woman who tosses her head, and curls up her nose, and answers 'fiddlesticks!' I tell you, dear

Namby-pamby-ism. — *Page* 119.

friend, it is a matter of great encouragement that the temperance cause has made the advances which it has, when you think of the namby-pamby-ism of one-third of its nominal advocates."

CHAPTER V.

A PARTY AGAINST A PARTY.

DURING the time that we were taking our lunch, which, I ought to say in passing, we took on Lincoln street; I was revolving in my mind some of Miss Susan's last statements, and wondering just what they meant. At last my thoughts shaped themselves into question:

"Why! aren't the temperance people as a rule doing about as much as they can to help along the cause? at least, so far as they have brains to see what helps it."

"Oh, I don't know; one hates to think that all the trouble is due to lack of brains. I believe that man was right, whoever he was, who said that half the people in the world would rather be called wicked, than weak. But you don't know how absurd some things are. The arguments and excuses advanced by some who would like to appear consistent, would perfectly amaze you. Girls, are worse than boys. I think boys like to keep a show of

common sense on their side when they talk, but it seems to make no difference with girls. Some of us tried to have them show *that* Mr. McIntosh of the new distillery, you know, that he must get into respectable business if he wanted to keep respectable company. And one of our young misses, said: "It isn't as if he sold liquor by the glass, you know; his business is strictly wholesale; he never sells less than a barrel full."

"What do you think of that for an argument in favor of a man's position? Last winter two or three young ladies in society would not sign our total abstinence pledge because they couldn't

allow their names to appear in such a conspicuous place. And those very ladies were named in the city papers a few weeks before, on the occasion of their being at a fancy dress party. Their very costumes, down to minute points, were described. Isn't that consistency! Another girl wouldn't sign because she 'did not approve of making such solemn promises.' She said so, anyway, but she was married this fall, and it seemed to me that the promises she made were quite as solemn as those which the temperance pledge requires. Then there is another thing that tries my patience wonderfully. For the sake of the cause, I wish it might become

fashionable to attend temperance meetings. It is absolutely a disgrace to our city, that we cannot get a respectable audience of church-going people out to our temperance meetings.

"The most trivial excuses are made—ludicrous, if they were not sad. 'Nothing new can be said about temperance,' one of our business men said to me last week; 'don't see any use in having meetings.' Now so far as that argument proves anything, it proves too much. Do you think that there is anything very new to be said about the way of salvation? Others find fault about the speakers; some of them are so dull, and some of them make gram-

matical errors, and some of them speak too long! Oh, nonsense! think of Christian people talking in that way! Men don't act so about politics. As if the object in having temperance meetings was to please the intellect, or cultivate the esthetic! To be sure, one would rather have good speakers than poor ones, and I think we ought to try for the best talent there is; but why can't *Christian* people at least, see that they have no right to consult their inclinations? that the object is to save souls, and bodies, and that in every conceivable place, and at every possible time, when an opportunity is offered, it is their duty to put themselves where

they will be sure to be counted on the right side.

We were on the street again by this time, and my voluble friend interrupted herself to say: "This is Mr. Holland's place of business; I must see him a minute." He was a young man of different stamp from any whom we had seen that day, and Miss Susan's manner of enlisting him was noticeably different from that which she had used with the others: "Mr. Holland, will you help us?" This was her first earnest sentence. It was just the sort of sentence to interest him. Then she told of the evening's plans, and of the efforts under way to control them. "We

need your help," she said earnestly; "some of those young men you know, have little self control; they need to be led; will you help to lead them in the right direction?"

"I will try;" he answered her, with flushed face and firmly set mouth. "I will second any effort that you desire to make. Miss Susan, you can depend upon me."

He received very earnest thanks. No sooner were we outside of his office, than my friend said with satisfaction in her voice:

"That is splendid! Mr. Holland is one of our reformed men, and I am always a little bit worried about him,

just for the reason that he is so strong in his own strength. He resents the slightest hint that any place may be dangerous to *him*; but when it comes to helping others, that is another matter. I was afraid he would have a suspicion that I feared for him."

"Your temperance work doesn't always admit of the exact truth, does it?" I asked, more for the sake of hearing how she would answer, than because I was so very dull. She flashed an inquiring glance at me, as she replied promptly:

"It doesn't always admit of telling all you know to everybody, any more than most other subjects of importance

do, but if you think I did not tell the *exact* truth to Mr. Holland, you mistake. Some of those young men are much weaker than he is, and they need his help. That is not saying that he too, is not in need of help; yet, since to say that is going to hinder rather than help him, why should I say it?"

We were passing Mrs. Chester's elegant mansion as she spoke, and that suggested to me a change of subject:

"I wonder that you are not engaged to Mrs. Chester, this evening; she has a reception, you know."

"Yes'm, but I'm *never* engaged to Mrs. Chester now-days, and I do what I can to prevent other people from being.

"I dread her influence over a certain class, more than I do that of any rum-seller among them."

"Why, pray?"

"Because, she is more dangerous. Besides, it is an embarrassing place to visit. Would you like to take tea, for instance, with a person who was in the habit of decorating her table with a dozen different dishes, which you from conscientious scruples would have to refuse? I really think that woman is more talented in her line than any one I know; she would do for a walking cook-book. Jellies, of all flavors, peaches, pears, sauces, pies, cake, even innocent looking custards, are danger-

Mrs. Chester. — *Page* 133.

ous articles to touch from her table. I really didn't know it was *possible* to serve up Satan's favorite mixture in so many ways, until I knew Mrs. Chester. I think she must spend her time in planning new dishes that she can make into elegant little traps for catching the unwary. She has done what she could towards ruining the young men of our city, and it just enrages me to think how powerless she would be, if the young ladies of her set would take the position on this subject, that one has a right to expect of them. But we are improving; one by one, they drop out of her circle; there are several now

whom she invites in vain, and she knows the reason why."

"How late it is! did you imagine it? This matter has taken more time than I thought it would, but we have things in train now. I believe we can go down to Roberts', and have a look at the new pictures, if you would like."

To this plan I eagerly agreed; but as we were turning the corner, a hurried gentleman ran against us, and his hasty "I beg your pardon," instantly changed into: "Oh Miss Susan! I am glad it is you, we need you, there is trouble ahead."

"What trouble?"

"Our boys at the school, twenty of

them, are to be invited to a gathering this evening at Turner's, an impromptu affair—all the merrier they will think—a moonlight ride, and all that sort of thing. There will be plenty of wine; several of our evening school boys, vote for the first time in the coming election. It is important, you see, to pay them some attention."

"You don't have school to-morrow evening?"

"No, I thought it was going to be specially inconvenient; but if I could have foreseen such a thing as this, I should have tried to push the school, without regard to convenience. I heard of this just now, by accident; the boys

are to be invited as a school, in order to catch them all; is there anything that we can do at this late hour?"

Miss Susan thought, looked at her watch, and was silent for the space of a minute, then said briskly:

"Why, yes, of course. The boys need entertainment, do they? I don't know but that is a good idea, but it becomes us to see that they have it in a less objectionable way: *I'll* give a party, Mr. Stuart; will you give the invitations for me, at once?"

"Tell each boy that he is to invite the young lady with whom he would like best to spend the evening, to accompany him."

"When?" asked Mr. Stuart, surprise and admiration, struggling together on his face.

"Why this evening, to be sure. And you must hasten, to be ahead of the others. And Mr. Stuart, will you after you have delivered the invitations, see Frank Holden, and tell him we want his help at once? tell him to come to my home, please. Where are we? Oh, yes, there is the confectioner's that I want, right across the street. Oh, we'll have a charming party. You may come Mr. Stuart, for a little while; not long, you know; we don't want any dignity or propriety, this evening. I'm very sorry," she added, turning to me,

"but I'm afraid we shall have to give up the art-gallery to-day; for you see we must hurry home and get ready for a party. Mr. Stuart, when it is convenient, you may thank those people down at Turner's for their prospective entertainment. It has given me a new idea. It is not the first time I have thought that Satan's emissaries have some very good plans."

Mr. Stuart looked after her as she made a sudden dash towards the confectioner's, and as I lingered to have a word with him on my own account, he said: "That girl is worth forty-five temperance lectures, and a dozen temperance conventions."

"Now for home," Miss Susan said, as she turned with a satisfied air from the elegant counter, where she had been giving royal orders for an evening entertainment.

I had been musing while I watched her, and now, giving voice to my thoughts, I said: "After all, there are very few people who can do these things, they haven't the money."

"I know it," she said quickly. "The money is father's part; he has the money, and I have the time, so we combine our forces; he earns the money and I spend it.

"But don't you know there are a hundred ways of working? Some peo-

ple can give temperance lectures, and some people can write temperance books, and some people can employ men who are trying to reform, and some people can open their homes for the entertainment of tempted young men, and some people can make their kitchens neat and sweet for the help of the tempted husband, or son, and some people can study how to make the mince pies, rich, and juicy, and delightful, without the aid of a drop of brandy. Oh, there are so many ways! ways that don't need money at all. In point of fact, my friend, do you realize that this last venture of mine takes the first cent of money which I have spent for

How to make the mince pies. —*Page* 140.

the cause to-day? And as for parties other people give them, temperance people, too; the question is: why *don't* they consecrate them? It doesn't seem to me that it is money, or time, or strength, or talent, that is lacking, it is the consecrated heart. A heart that is given first to Christ, and secondly, to His work, whatever form it may take, or whatever may be the door that opens. 'Do with thy might, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do;' is our commission, you know; and in order to *find* things, we have to look for them. People talk sometimes, about ambition, as if it were a wicked thing. I think it is a mis-

directed ambition which causes trouble, don't you?"

By this time we had reached her father's house, and as she ascended the steps she turned to me with her whole face aglow with feeling. "I declare to you," she said:

"That I have an all absorbing, a consuming ambition; it is to have the King put his hand on mine, and say: 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' I want to be a good servant; I shall not be content without the commendation promised to those who faithfully serve, my ambition craves it. Now, we must go to work; I mean that those boys shall have the nicest time to-night

that they ever had in their lives. You are to help, my friend; you are to make some perfectly exquisite bouquets. Do you suppose many people who have flowers, realize their refining influence on young men? I wonder if people realize that they can arrange flowers in such a manner as to glorify the Lord of the garden? Such remembrances make glowing work of life, I think.

> "Who sweeps a room, as for thy law,
> Makes that, and the action fine."

"You know I am glad the grand old author said that. And yet, an older and grander author said it better. 'Whosoever giveth a cup of cold water,' you know. And then he intensified it, with

his wonderful: 'Inasmuch.' Don't you love that word? 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the *least* of these, *my brethren*, ye did it unto me.' Think of that! I tell you, I must have that reward."

Does anybody doubt but that she will one day hear the grand voice say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"

THE END.

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